



*Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond*  
January 1 - 8, 2016

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# Aboriginal Arts & Culture

## Vancouver teen Ta'Kaiya Blaney's voice captures the world's attention

MIKE HAGER

VANCOUVER — The Globe and Mail

Published Thursday, Dec. 31, 2015 7:42PM EST

Last updated Thursday, Dec. 31, 2015 7:46PM EST

Not many teenagers can drop casual references about the time they spoke in New York at a United Nations panel, or when they sang for hundreds at the Paris climate talks.

But in between home-schooling in North Vancouver, such activities have become regular occurrences for 14-year-old singer and First Nations activist Ta'Kaiya Blaney. She has spent the past several years performing and speaking about indigenous issues and climate change at conferences, panels and protests throughout Canada and in cities such as Rio de Janeiro and Bandung, Indonesia.

Always wearing a traditional cedar-bark hat, she sings haunting melodies whose lyrics reveal how indigenous peoples have been silenced politically at the same time as their intricate bond with the environment wanes. She says this tenuous link first came into sharp focus for her while growing up near Powell River, B.C., in the Sliammon First Nation, where she noticed that heavy logging meant elders could no longer find trees large enough to build their traditional canoes.

“It’s [also] something that you witness in the eyes of those you love when you ask for certain words in your language and there’s a look of sadness because no one can remember,” she said recently as her family prepared to leave to spend the holidays on the Sunshine Coast reserve. “Or you ask for a specific teaching that has been so woven into the fabric of your community … and continued practice of that culture, and no one can remember that.

“You can only see so much inequality as a young person before your naiveté and natural sense of justice propels you to take action.”

She began singing with voice coach Aileen De La Cruz about a decade ago. Starting when she was 8, they spent two years writing *Shallow Waters*, her protest song against Enbridge’s controversial Northern Gateway pipeline proposal, which would carry oil sands bitumen from Alberta to British Columbia’s coast.

After sending the finished track to the Canadian arm of Greenpeace, which she says helped mentor her activism, she travelled to Enbridge’s downtown Vancouver offices to hand-deliver a copy of the music video along with a letter asking the company to rethink its proposal.

“We were met with extremely reinforced security, so I got as far as the lobby before a security guard said if I went any farther that I would be charged with trespassing,” Ms. Blaney recalled. “Yes, large corporations can be afraid of a 10-year-old girl.”

The polished performer now serves as a youth ambassador for Native Children’s Survival, a non-profit organization run by native-American rock musician Robby Romero, who is also managing her singing career. Each year she sandwiches any international engagements into several weeks, using the honorariums she receives to speak or sing to help pay for her mother and father to join her at these events.

In the past two years she has performed at the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues in New York, Idle No More and Occupy Wall Street protests as well as a number of colleges and conferences across North America.

She says that it’s unfortunate that she must contribute to greenhouse-gas emissions by flying across the world, but maintains these events are working “within a current system to build a ladder to our ideal world.” She plans to continue to be a strong voice for First Nations peoples in the face of a global environmental crisis.

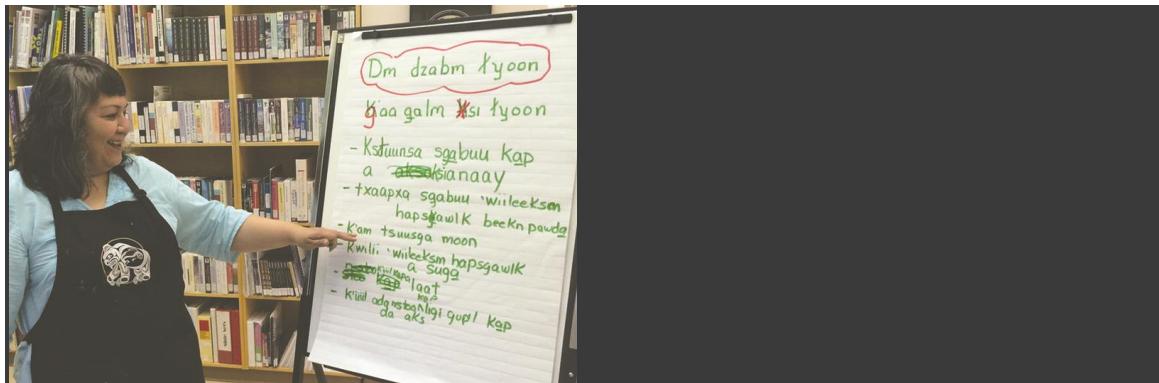
“Too often I go to UN conferences and I see NGOs try to impose their alternative and newly formulated methods of conservation on indigenous communities,” Ms. Blaney said. “When actually, you don’t really need to tell indigenous people how to conserve and take care of the land, it’s just so inherent to our culture.

“It’s very important to be proud of your identity … and feeling that sense of empowerment. Growing up as an indigenous person, I didn’t get to see myself reflected in the pages of history books that I was taught from.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/vancouver-teen-takaiya-blaneys-voice-captures-the-worlds-attention/article27979163/>

**First Nations Language Centre to begin testing on First Nations language apps**  
Suite of apps looks to help revitalize 12 indigenous languages of BC and Yukon

January 1st, 2016 by [Albert Kho](#)



According to the First Peoples' Cultural Council, a Crown Corporation working to revitalize Aboriginal languages and culture in BC, there are 203 First Nations communities in BC with over 40 recognized languages. Many languages have no remaining fluent speakers and many face extinction without outside intervention. Dr. Marianne Ignace of SFU's First Nations Language Centre (FNLC) is working on a technological solution to this problem.

The Centre is working on the Tlli7sa Storybook Mobile and Web Application concept, a series of apps looking to provide educational content for courses and general use. It uses visual, auditory, and interactive tools to teach both the languages of a community and the community's cultural history.

Ignace hopes the apps can raise awareness for the 12 Indigenous languages of BC and the Yukon that are the focus of the apps as well as all Indigenous languages of BC and the Yukon. Her team has worked closely with many groups such as the Haida, Tlingit, and the Skwxwu7mesh (Squamish), and have also worked with the Hellenic Studies Program by utilising a language tutor platform originally intended to teach Greek.

With a \$2.5 million dollar federal government grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to develop the app, the Centre expects to start testing early pilot versions sometime during 2016. Ignace hopes to release the first group of apps to learners in 2017.

The communities, all of whom are working with the Centre through a seven-year partnership that began in 2013, will be given the option to release the apps to everyone in the world, or to directly manage content and access through a server.

With everything falling into place, Ignace hopes to have developed all the apps within the next five years. But it has been difficult at times, "because the languages are so different from one another. It really [wasn't] feasible to work with a single content template," she told [SFU News](#). The contents of the apps have also taken a lot of time and effort to produce, especially with its "storybook" format of visual and auditory learning aids.

Ignace explained to SFU News that she hopes that the app, along with the Centre's current efforts, will "provide a unique avenue to [learn their ancestral language].

**Direct Link:** <http://www.the-peak.ca/2016/01/first-nations-language-centre-to-begin-testing-on-first-nations-language-apps/>

## **Spotlight on aboriginal performances and issues at National Arts Centre in January**

**Performances, art, panel discussions in response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission**

By Sandra Abma, CBC News Posted: Jan 04, 2016 4:16 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 04, 2016 5:45 PM ET



Images from a film based on the poem, I Lost My Talk, accompanied by the music of John Estacio. ( Milan Podsedly)

Does art have the power to mend wounds and build bridges?

The National Arts Centre hopes that its month-long celebration of indigenous story telling, music, dance and spoken word performances will address the dark history of Canada's residential school system but also pave the way for healing and reconciliation.

"It's very appropriate for the arts to play a role in this," said Genevieve Simon, director of music education at the NAC.

"Art offers an incredible safe place where one can listen and hopefully learn and then share that experience."

Aboriginal artists of all disciplines, school children from northern communities and the National Arts Centre Orchestra will be taking part in a myriad of activities in January showcasing the accomplishments of indigenous artists while reflecting on the darker aspects of aboriginal history in this country.

## **World premiere at NAC**



Mi'kmaq poet Rita Joe was invested into the Order of Canada by then governor general Ray Hnatyshyn in 1990. (Canadian Press)

Forbidden to speak her native language Mi'kmaq poet and elder Rita Joe, C.M. wrote about the loss and loneliness she felt as a little girl in a Nova Scotia residential school. Her poem, *I Lost My Talk*, has become an anthem to generations of aboriginal youth who see the words as a call to reclaim their voice.

The NACO, under the baton of music director Alexander Shelley, will premiere composer John Estacio's musical ode to *I Lost My Talk* on Jan. 14-15. It's a multimedia performance blending, dance, music, film and narration.

"With *I Lost My Talk* we pushed the boundaries of the concert hall even further creating an immersive experience that engages all the senses through music, spoken word, motion and film," said Shelley in a statement.

The piece was commissioned by Maureen McTeer in honour of her husband Joe Clark's 75th birthday.

## Rita Joe song project

School children from a number of reserves across the country were asked to create their own songs inspired by the Rita Joe poem.

The results will be unveiled on January 13 in the NAC Fourth Stage featuring performances by students from two of the Rita Joe Song Project groups, Eskasoni and Maniwaki, and either a live performance via video link or a screening of the music video from a third group in Iqaluit.

Educational and art workshops with the students will take place throughout the day at the NAC.

## **Joseph Boyden story**



Joseph Boyden will also take part in a panel discussion on the legacy of residential schools. (Penguin)

The Royal Winnipeg Ballet performs *Going Home Star-Truth and Reconciliatlon*, a new dance work based on a story by Joseph Boyden that tells the contemporary love story of a young aboriginal couple coping with the scars they carry from their childhood. (Jan. 28 to 30 in Southam Hall)

Boyden, the award winning author of *Three Day Road* and *The Oreanda*, will also take part in a panel discussion on the legacy of residential schools and the role of the arts in healing.

The discussion will be moderated by Marie Wilson, a commissioner with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, with panelists Rachael Maza, the acclaimed Australian theatre director and John Estacio. (Jan. 14 Panorama Room)

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/aboriginal-artists-national-arts-centre-truth-reconciliation-1.3388576>

## **First Nations artist makes appearance at Stayner art gallery**



## First Nations artist makes appearance at Stayner art gallery

IAN ADAMS

*Rational Expressions Gallery owners Darren and Lesley Martel with 'Killarney', a work by artist James Mishibinijima. Mishibinijima will be speaking at the gallery, Jan. 23.*

Wasaga Sun

By [Ian Adams](#), 8 hours ago

A noted Canadian artist will be making a stop at a Stayner gallery later this month.

James Mishibinijima will be at Rational Expressions on Jan. 23 to speak about his work currently on display in the gallery.

His presentation will begin at 2 p.m. with a smudge ceremony.

Mishibinijima has created a unique body of work over the last four decades and has established a loyal following in North America and overseas; he is currently working on a commissioned portrait of German chancellor Angela Merkel.

He has been awarded a number of first place and best-of-show prizes at international art exhibitions, and currently serves as a judge and mentor a number of art shows. He also develops curriculum materials for First Nations schools.

Over the last 40 years, Mishibinijima has explored a number of areas around Manitoulin Island considered sacred, and the themes depicted in his work speak to those who yearn for spiritual sustenance. In his work, he underscores the wisdom of the Grandfather teachings as a way to foster respect and peace and emphasizes the interconnectedness of all life and the need to preserve our natural surroundings for the benefit of our children.

For more information on Mishibinijima's appearance, or to RSVP for a seat, call the gallery at 705-441-6625. The gallery is located at the corner of Scott Street and Hwy. 26.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.simcoe.com/news-story/6220275-first-nations-artist-makes-appearance-at-stayner-art-gallery/>

## A Tribe Called Red to launch month-long NAC indigenous series

NAC Presents is also celebrating its fifth anniversary.



Fresh off their first Australian tour, A Tribe Called Red will be launching a month-long indigenous-series at the National Arts Centre on Sat., Jan. 9.

By: [Lucy Scholey](#) Metro Published on Tue Jan 05 2016

Members of A Tribe Called Red spent a night in an Australian indigenous tent embassy in Canberra late last year, meeting elders and tasting kangaroo.

The Juno Award-winning native DJ collective – known for showcasing its mix of powwow vocals, electronic beats and drumming at the sweaty Electric Pow Wow dance parties at Babylon – ended 2015 with its first-ever tour down under.

“It’s awesome going to Europe and getting to share our message and what we do over there,” said collective member Bear Witness, “but when we get to go to someplace like Mexico or Australia ... where other indigenous people have had these similar experiences of living in a colonized country, there’s something more exciting about that, about going there and sharing those experiences with those people.”

The tent embassy – a gathering place and symbol of Australia’s aboriginal land rights struggles – is one example.

The trio, Bear Witness, DJ NDN and Zoolman, is known for playing visuals that pack a strong message – political or funny clips that reference native people. And the group heard praise in Australia for inspiring indigenous youth.

But Bear Witness said the group does not create music with a message in mind.

“When we make our music, we’re thinking, ‘Are people going to be able to dance to this?’ That’s where our inspiration comes from. That’s where our heads are at.”

But fans can expect a more message-laden new album, which may drop this spring, and more collaborative songs (akin to the remix of Buffy Saint-Marie’s “Working for the Government”).

Now that A Tribe Called Red is back on Canadian soil, the trio is launching the National Art Centre's month-long series of indigenous music, storytelling and dancing during NAC Presents on Saturday, Jan. 9.

**NAC Presents turns five**

**What:** Canadian musicians the likes of Hey Rosetta!, Corb Lund and Oliver Jones have been gracing the NAC for its special NAC Presents series for five years. The national capital institution is celebrating that musical milestone this weekend with five acts: A Tribe Called Red, Toronto-based multidisciplinary artist U.S. Girls, funk-pop-punk musician Mehdi Cayenne, four-piece rock and roll band the Lionyls, and Live 88.5's DJ Noah.

**Date:** Saturday, Jan. 9 at the NAC's main lobby

**Tickets:** Start at \$15

**What if I can't make it?**

There will be many other NAC Presents shows this season. That includes:

- Petr Cancura with guest Lynn Miles on Feb. 4
- Corb Lund and the Hurtin' Albertans on Feb. 19
- David Francey on March 4
- Alex Cuba on March 5
- The Weather Station on March 31
- Oh Susanna on April 8
- Michael Kaeshammer on April 23
- Amanda Rheaume on May 5
- Royal Wood with guest Rose Cousins and the NAC Orchestra on May 6
- Oliver Jones on May 19

For more, visit [nac-cna.ca](http://nac-cna.ca).

**Direct Link:** <http://www.metronews.ca/news/ottawa/2016/01/06/a-tribe-called-red-to-launch-month-long-nac-indigenous-series.html>

## **Aboriginal Business & Finance**

### **Sask. NDP seems split on First Nations revenue sharing**

MORGAN MODJESKI, SASKATOON STARPHOENIX

Published on: January 2, 2016 | Last Updated: January 2, 2016 11:30 AM CST



Dr. Ryan Meili can be seen in this Saskatoon StarPhoenix file photo. Meili is taking issue with policy changes made by the NDP, noting he as a member only found out about the changes in late December.

A political scientist at the University of Saskatchewan says a divide in the provincial New Democratic Party over First Nations revenue sharing may be an obstacle for the party heading into the 2016 election year.

On Dec. 29, NDP party member Ryan Meili, who has previously run for the party leadership twice, publicly criticized Opposition Leader Cam Broten for stepping back from the idea of sharing resource revenues with First Nations, calling the move “an embarrassing step backwards,” in a Facebook post.

In an emailed response to questions about the post, Meili said while he had no intention to “cause difficulties for the party or its leadership,” the effects of stepping away from revenue sharing need to be closely examined before a final decision is made.

“The ramifications of simply abandoning the approach without deeper consideration are worthy of comment,” Meili said. “This is an extremely important debate. To allow it to be derailed due to divisive and adversarial politics is a lost opportunity.”

Charles Smith, an assistant professor and political scientist at St. Thomas More College said the divide has been present over the last few elections, noting a united party base is important in the lead-up to any election.

“It speaks to the divisiveness that has been there for a while,” he said. “When you look at the leader campaign and the close race between Mr. Broten and Mr. Meili, it was over progressive issues, and this was one of them.”

“A party very much wants to go into an election, in this case the NDP, united in terms of having their membership mobilized and excited,” Smith said.



Normally, for obvious reasons, I don't criticize or comment on the actions of Cam Broten and the SK NDP. However, this is a decision that needs to be identified as an embarrassing step backwards.

What he says in this article is inconsistent with party policy and it's inconsistent with Broten's own position when he ran for leadership of the party and criticized Trent Wotherspoon for having said something similar.

More importantly it is inconsistent with the needs of this province, with an approach to creating greater equality between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, and very likely with the laws of the land.

As for suggesting that First Nations leadership is opposed to revenue-sharing, that is an outright falsehood, completely inconsistent with the official position of the FSIN.

I urge fellow members of the party to bring forward their disappointment with this decision to Mr. Broten, his caucus and the candidates. Ignoring party policy is no way to approach democracy. Ruling out an essential tool for dealing with poverty and inequality is no way to approach reconciliation.

The post from Ryan Meili's Facebook page criticizing Cam Broten.

The NDP made First Nations revenue sharing part of its platform during the 2011 election campaign.

In response to a request for an interview with Broten this week, party officials said he was not available and provided a written statement instead.

“After consulting widely, we confirmed for the province about 18 months ago that we wouldn’t be campaigning on the vague pledge from the last election,” it said.

“Instead, we’re campaigning on meaningful specifics, starting with closing the education funding gap. That’s a concrete first step in ensuring everyone has the opportunity to participate in Saskatchewan’s economy and prosperity.”

The statement also noted the decision was supported by delegates at the NDP’s last convention.

However, Meili said he was surprised by the move. He first heard about the change when Broten commented on the issue in a CBC interview published on Dec. 29, he said.

“I was not aware of any change in party policy until now, and I would imagine that there would be a large number of members who would be similarly surprised by notice of this change,” Meili said in the email.

“The response to the article on social media certainly seems to indicate that this is news to many and that now is an opportune time for concerns to be brought forward.”



NDP Leader Cam Broten during a year-end interview.

Smith said the issue has resurfaced for several reasons, including the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's report, alongside a renewed dialogue between the federal government and Canada's indigenous peoples.

Meili said he would like to see a resource royalty review that could examine the current process and result in a plan for "more equitable distribution of benefits accrued from resource development, including benefits for First Nations peoples."

"We need a deeper discussion about how all Saskatchewan people can best benefit from resource wealth," he said.

The NDP's statement said the party is confident people who have expressed concerns about the decision will "appreciate our focus, once they see more details."

**Direct Link:** <http://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/sask-ndp-seems-split-on-first-nations-revenue-sharing>

## **Forcing reports to Ottawa undermines First Nations accountability**

STEVEN SALTERIO AND RUSSELL EVANS

Contributed to The Globe and Mail

Published Monday, Jan. 04, 2016 5:00AM EST

Last updated Monday, Jan. 04, 2016 5:00AM EST

*Steven E. Salterio is professor and director of the CPA-Queen's Centre for Governance at the Smith School of Business, Queen's University. Russell A. Evans is a PhD candidate in accounting at the Smith School of Business.*

Accountability is a buzzword of our time. The legitimate right to compel others to account for their actions in democratic institutions resides with those who elect them as their representatives. But in the strange world of Canada's First Nations, it is the federal government that asserts itself as the legitimate body to call elected First Nations leaders to account.

It's no wonder that First Nations leaders, seeking to enhance their legitimacy with their own people, have opted to go to the courts to fight Ottawa's demands.

Excessive federal government accountability demands on First Nations are well documented. The 2002 Auditor-General's report found that the average First Nations community in Canada was required to complete 168 reports annually just to keep funding for basic services flowing to their bands. Imagine 168 accountability reports for a median-sized community of 1,000 people, located far from major population centres and facing social and educational challenges on par with many Third World countries. A decade later, the Auditor-General revisited this accountability overload and found no improvement.

Yet in a political response to the Idle No More movement, then-prime minister Stephen Harper's government mandated a 169th report through the First Nations Financial Transparency Act. Of course, the government rhetoric was about raising the accountability of First Nations leaders to their people. How was this to be achieved? By requiring 581 First Nations to publicly post their audited financial statements and the salary information of the chief and council to the federal Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development website.

Failure to comply with this 169th report was enforced by the threat of withholding band administration funds – the very money needed to bring bands into compliance. With astuteness worthy of Machiavelli, former aboriginal affairs minister Bernard Valcourt disingenuously suggested that First Nations divert funds from social and educational programs, which would continue to flow as block grants, to the band administration!

Astonishingly, this suggestion was made at a time when Mr. Harper's government was attempting to portray First Nations leaders as dishonest and corrupt to their own communities. There are currently 43 First Nations not in compliance with the act, with a total of \$1.2-million of funding being withheld. What this tells us is that despite the accountability overload represented by report No. 169 and its questionable motives, the vast majority of band leaders have complied with its requirements. The result is simple: The demand for accountability to Ottawa in the name of band members leads to these very members viewing their elected leaders as government pawns. This is hardly the heady stuff of leaders of sovereign governments, who are supposed to be advocating for their people's legitimate rights on a "nation to nation" basis. Indeed, the rare cases of legitimate First Nations resistance to the regime of excessive accountability tend to be trumpeted negatively in the news media. This adds to the climate of animosity and mistrust between First Nations people and the general Canadian population, blurring the reality that First Nations have the skills to govern themselves.

Achieving First Nations sovereignty begins with a demonstration of First Nations leaders' ability to govern, including a focus on leaders accounting to those who elect them. Accountability demands that focus First Nation leaders' attention solely on complying with federal government reporting is a roadblock on the path to self-government. While many indigenous people view self-government as far from perfect, it begins to return the First Nations communities to "nation-to-nation" status with Canada, as defined in the 1763 Royal Proclamation, in court decisions and in our Constitution.

Government paternalism, hidden in the form of rhetoric about increased accountability, only hinders the advancement of First Nations toward sovereignty. If advances are not made soon, we will merely see the continuation of the long, unhealthy relationship between Canada and the First Nations. Let us hope that the new federal government does not repeat the mistakes of the past, and that it takes actions to develop a framework where accountability of First Nations leaders to their own people is seen as first and foremost.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/report-on-business/rob-commentary/forcing-reports-to-ottawa-undermines-first-nations-accountability/article27989235/>

## **The Record's view: Keep First Nations fully accountable**

Waterloo Region Record

By Editorial, 18 hours ago

Our new prime minister, Justin Trudeau, has been undoing many of the actions of his predecessor. Trudeau's Liberal government has already moved to restore the mandatory long-form census. It has also let federally-employed scientists know they are now free to speak to the media. In both these cases, Trudeau's actions reversed deeply unpopular moves made by former prime minister Stephen Harper.

But let's not throw out every baby with the bathwater. Some of the initiatives that Harper created were reforms that Canada badly needed. The First Nations Financial Transparency Act is one of them.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett recently announced that Canada will reinstate some \$12 million in funds that had been destined for certain First Nations, but were frozen by the previous government when their leadership failed to file audited financial statements, including the salaries of chiefs and councils. Bennett has also announced that any court actions on this issue will be suspended. With these two developments, she has rendered toothless the financial transparency measures that the Conservatives had put in place. Why?

Bennett says she wants a new process in place that is based on "respect, co-operation and partnership." But what is disrespectful about asking First Nations bands to be accountable and transparent to all Canadians, including, most importantly, their own members? Don't they have just as much right to know where their money is going and what their chief is

being paid, as any non-aboriginal person has the right to know how much the mayor makes?

Of 581 bands across this country, only 38 had not complied with the First Nations Financial Transparency Act as of mid-December. That is a compliancy rate of more than 93 per cent, which suggests the law was working well. Although the penalty for not complying was loss of federal money, the actual punishment was minor, because under Harper's law the funds for essential items like education, housing and health continued to flow whether the band was in compliance or not.

The transparency act has been helpful on a number of levels. Since it was first implemented in the 2013-14 fiscal year, members of two British Columbia bands discovered their leaders were earning outrageously high salaries. One leader was paid \$914,219 for governing 82 members. Another chief was dumped after it was discovered he earned \$200,000 for presiding over 87 members.

Even more valuable was the information that the vast majority of the bands are well and prudently run. Chiefs earn a modest median salary of \$60,000. This information helps to combat some of the harmful stereotypes that exist about band leadership. What possible change could Bennett introduce that would produce a better outcome?

Trudeau has said he values information and research. He has promised a more open and transparent government. Good for him. But surely that principle should apply to everyone.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.therecord.com/opinion-story/6215213-the-record-s-view-keep-first-nations-fully-accountable/>

## **OmniTrax could sell Manitoba assets to northern First Nations**

KACPER ANTOSZEWSKI / THOMPSON CITIZEN  
JANUARY 5, 2016 11:18 AM

In a recent release, OmniTrax Canada announced that they have accepted a letter of intent from a group of Northern Manitoban First Nations for the purchase of its Manitoba assets, including the Hudson Bay Railway and the Port of Churchill. The acceptance marks the beginning of a 45-day due-diligence period, where the rail line, port, its containing property, and contract of sale will be examined by the purchasing party, with co-operation of OmniTrax Canada, to ensure the purchase meets the expectations of all parties involved.

OmniTrax Canada quietly announced plans to sell the port and railway at the beginning of December, at the end of a poor year in grain shipments. At the time of the announcement, OmniTrax Canada president Merv Tweed noted, "We've managed the rail and the port well, and we've put it in a position where it can be profitable, but as a

private investor, you have to make a return. I think it's time for new ownership to see what they can do."

The Hudson Bay Railway constitutes not only a commercial endeavour, but is also a primary supply line for several remote communities otherwise only accessible by air. Tweed noted an ideal buyer would have interests in the rail line where "profitability isn't necessarily their main objective."

"Having visited many communities along the rail line, it became clear that the rail line serves as a utility for these remote communities," says Tweed, "And for the line and assets to truly succeed, First Nation participation in ownership and management was essential."

Though several First Nations groups have been contacted regarding the sale, no further information has been released regarding the buyer of the contract as of yet. Tweed said that further details will be available "in the new year."

- See more at: <http://www.thompsoncitizen.net/news/thompson/omnitrax-could-sell-manitoba-assets-to-northern-first-nations-1.2144284#sthash.AK4gQM0O.dpuf>

## **Judge says insider's fraud gave aboriginal business program a 'black eye'**

DARYL SLADE, CALGARY HERALD

**More from Daryl Slade, Calgary Herald**

**Published on: January 6, 2016 | Last Updated: January 6, 2016 6:32 PM MST**



The Calgary Courts Centre.

A Calgary judge ordered an Edmonton man into custody on Wednesday to start his sentence for defrauding the federal government of \$193,500 through kickbacks on business incentive opportunities while employed as a development officer by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada.

“You have given this program a real black eye,” provincial court Judge Mike Dinkel told Gerald Eugene Crick, 47, before adjourning sentencing to Jan. 14. “That money directed by you is money that couldn’t go to programs involving native people.

“This accused couldn’t do this without being in a position of trust. Is his moral blameworthy high? Yes. Is his culpability high? Yes.”

Crown prosecutor Shelley Smith argued for a two-year jail sentence plus restitution of \$153,250 for Crick, who pleaded guilty last February to fraud over \$5,000.

“The offence occurred over a long time period, and required organization, planning and execution of the organized plan to defraud the Government of Canada,” Smith argued. “Forged documents take time and effort.”

Defence lawyer Kim Ross, citing alcohol and gambling problems as the trigger for the crimes, pitched a sentence of six to 10 months behind bars for his client. He said Crick is a “good person” with no prior criminal record and grew up in a household rife with alcohol abuse and violence.

According to an agreed statement of facts presented by Smith and Ross, Crick recruited four people between 2003 and 2006 to complete false applications for funding using their names.

The frauds were perpetrated through false applications, one from Daniel Kutarna of Crossfield for \$80,500 for opening and operating a mobile water-hauling service.

A false Canadian Metis Council Identification Card was submitted for Kutarna, 36, who is not a member of an aboriginal group.

Kutarna previously pleaded guilty to money laundering and received a conditional discharge, with restitution of \$40,250 — half the amount he received from Crick.

Crick told the judge he was remorseful and was willing to accept his penalty.

“I just mostly want to let you know there is a price to pay for what I’ve done and I’m willing to pay that price,” he said. “My biggest concern is my family. My family is my life and they count on me.

“I totally understand what I did. This cost me everything. I’d like to share my experience with others.”

Crick, who worked at the ministry’s Edmonton and Calgary offices, told the people he recruited they would not have to do anything except sign some forms and a cheque would come to them. They were then told to cash the cheque and provide some of the money to Crick.

In one case, multiple applications were made by a man for \$70,000 in funding to open and operate a delivery service.

The other cases involved \$37,000 in funds for a man to open an electrical service on the Blood Tribe reserve and \$6,000 for a man to start a backhoe service.

**Direct Link:** <http://calgaryherald.com/news/crime/judge-says-man-gave-aboriginal-business-program-a-black-eye>

## Aboriginal Community Development

### Quebec social housing agency to test unit better adapted to northern culture

**Residents to test out new homes, provide feedback amid Northern Canada housing shortage**

By Morgan Lowrie, The Canadian Press Posted: Jan 03, 2016 12:42 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 03, 2016 12:42 PM ET



A new social housing unit is shown in a handout photo. (Handout/CP)

Amid what experts are calling an acute accommodation shortage in Northern Canada, the Quebec government is preparing to test a new social housing unit it says is better adapted to harsh climates and Inuit culture.

Quebec's social housing agency says a pilot project carried out in the Ungava Bay-area village of Quaqtaq with two bodies that oversee accommodation in the north is expected to be ready for occupants early in the new year.

The project will test a new prototype adapted from one of the units in use: a one-level duplex, with two two-bedroom apartments in each half and a mechanical unit in the middle containing water tank, furnace and ventilation system.

However, this unit has been fitted with better insulation to increase energy efficiency; aerodynamic features to minimize the inconvenience of accumulated snow; and pile foundations which are better suited to shifting permafrost.

Jean-Francois Gravel, a technical expert for the housing agency, says the goal of the project is to test the various individual elements to see which ones may be adopted in future models.

"The idea is not necessarily to repeat this model itself on a large scale, but to see what works well," he said.

Gravel says the technical elements, such as air quality and energy efficiency, will be monitored online by the agency. Pile foundations, he says, are widely used elsewhere in Canada's North but are still under-studied in Quebec.

## **'Empowerment through architecture'**

The families living there will also give their feedback on a number of changes to the floor plan based on the requests of a panel of Inuit residents during public consultations.

These include a combined living room, dining room and kitchen for large traditional family gatherings, as well as a cold porch for storing outdoor gear.

The design also includes a movable kitchen island to give more space options as well as a lockable cabinet for hunting gear, and large chopping blocks for preparing fish and game.

Alain Fournier, a founding partner at FGMDA Architectes, the firm that designed the model, said these functional elements contribute to a growing narrative he describes as "empowerment through architecture," where Inuit and First Nations communities are increasingly working with governments and architectural firms to design buildings that better represent them.

He points to a series of air terminals he's redesigned in the province's north in recent years — each with a theme chosen by the members of the community that relates to their culture.

He's designed one with a beluga theme, one the Arctic char and another that represent a traditional sled.

"These themes are integrated and expressed in the buildings and the integrated artwork," he said. "What's important is that ultimately it comes from them."

## **Waiting lists**

When it comes to building social housing, however, Fournier said some factors limit what can be done. Building costs in the Subarctic are three times higher than in the south due to climate, remoteness and lack of skilled labour.

Higher-quality materials cost more, and that may mean building fewer homes at a time when the housing shortage in northern Quebec is estimated at between 900 and 1,000 units.

Gravel says the bill for the pilot project has yet to be tallied, although costs will be higher than for normal units. Nevertheless, Fournier said it can pay off in the long run.

"Any improvement on energy efficiency means your operating costs — heating bills — are much lower, and the money saved can go to building more units," he said.

Jimmy Okpik, the housing manager in Quaqtaq, says he doesn't know which residents will get to test out the new units, but he is sure there will be no shortage of volunteers.

"There's always a waiting list," he said. "The waiting list never goes away."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/montreal/quebec-social-housing-agency-to-test-unit-better-adapted-to-northern-culture-1.3387630>

## **Beacon Hill Park, Victoria's 'perfect Eden,' to get historical makeover**

**JUSTINE HUNTER**

VICTORIA — The Globe and Mail

Published Thursday, Dec. 31, 2015 8:19PM EST

Last updated Thursday, Dec. 31, 2015 8:38PM EST

At the top of Beacon Hill, the city of Victoria is hiding an unsightly part of its heritage behind a tangle of overgrown shrubs. Built in the 1930s, the Checkers Pavilion once served as a recreation centre and a lookout over the Juan de Fuca Strait. Neglected for decades, it now stands boarded up, its cedar shake roof held together by thick clumps of moss.

Paving the way for the pavilion's destruction will stand as the proudest moment in her political career, city councillor Marianne Alto says. Once the debris is cleared, the city will repatriate the site to the local First Nations, who will build a traditional longhouse in its place — a restoration of a much older history.

Beacon Hill Park is the crown jewel of Victoria's park system, established as a protected green space by Vancouver Island's colonial governor, Sir James Douglas, in 1858. In claiming Beacon Hill for the growing colonial community at Fort Victoria, Governor Douglas described the spot as a "perfect Eden" in a dreary wilderness.

His Eden was shaped by the hands of the Lekwungen people who named the hilltop Meegan – a place warmed by the sun. Meegan was a busy trading post, a defensive fortification, a burial ground and a prime cultivated field of camas – the blue lily that still blooms in masses here in the spring and which was a valuable product for both food and trade.

In 2015, the site still attracts a regular stream of visitors and residents to admire the panoramic view of open fields, sparkling waters and the Olympic Mountains.

Standing on the bottom of the hill looking up, Ms. Alto spotted the peak of the pavilion's tattered roof through the shrubbery and pictured a different view. "Can you imagine what it would look like to see the prow of a beautiful cedar lodge standing there, representing that lookout that First Nations used for centuries before us?" she asked in an interview. "I had a moment of chills, thinking about opening a door to that history."

The Lekwungen-speaking people are now represented by the Esquimalt and Songhees First Nations, who will jointly build the longhouse for cultural and educational activities.

The title to the land underneath the longhouse will remain in the city's hands and the park rules that prohibit commercial activity will remain in force. But the derelict building on one of the most prominent public spaces in the city will be replaced with one full of activity once more.

"For thousands of years, the land atop what is now known as Beacon Hill has been a place of historical, cultural and sacred significance to the Lekwungen people," Esquimalt Chief Andy Thomas wrote to council in November. The new longhouse will be used to teach traditional carving techniques to youth from the Esquimalt and Songhees nations, he said, but it will also serve as a place to share the history and stories of the Lekwungen people with the public.

In an interview at the band office in Esquimalt, Chief Thomas recalled one of those stories: How his ancestors were persuaded to vacate their village site in Victoria to move to a less populated location on Esquimalt Harbour. "[James] Douglas at that time said to my great-great-great-grandfather Sisunuq, 'Pretty soon this place is going to be surrounded by a bunch of white people, some of them are not very nice, maybe you would be better off if you moved.' So the next morning, [Sisunuq and his people] decided to move here. They took down the walls [of the longhouse], made a raft, piled up the supplies and paddled around and came here. And put it back together again."

Chief Thomas produced an old photograph of the style of longhouse that could be packed up and moved – an early version of a mobile home with stout cedar planks for walls and a gently sloping roof. Only the massive wood pillars that anchored the building would be left behind.

"That's kind of what I envision," he said.

For the city, there is a practical edge to the longhouse vision as well. Earlier in 2015, city council received a staff report warning that the Checkers Pavilion is beyond repair. The city has dodged the problem for decades and now the cost of a replacement would be substantial. However, there are federal funds available to mark the 150th anniversary of Canadian Confederation, and Ms. Alto sees an opportunity to bring the reconciliation-themed project together with this celebration of colonialism.

The Songhees and the Esquimalt nations hope to access funding from Ottawa to tie the longhouse project with the anniversary. Ms. Alto says the city is backing that approach: "There would be a complementary nature to celebrating Canadian dominion for 150 years while at the same time showcasing the thousands of years of history that proceeded it," she said. "It's a nice touch."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/beacon-hill-park-victorias-perfect-eden-to-get-historical-makeover/article27979734/>

## **Toronto's first official Inuit group providing support to newcomers**

### **Inuit of Toronto Urban Katimavvik offers job, education, language supports**

CBC News Posted: Jan 04, 2016 10:41 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 04, 2016 1:39 PM CT



Inuit of Toronto Urban Katimavvik, or iTUK, is Toronto's first official Inuit group. About 60 Inuit got together Dec. 17 for its second annual Christmas feast, complete with country food. (Veronica E. Puskas)

An Inuk man has started Toronto's first official Inuit group, as a way to make life easier for Inuit moving to the big city.

Rob Lackie, who's from Happy Valley-Goose Bay, Labrador, moved to Toronto 15 years ago and says there weren't any education or job supports for Inuit. And he wasn't alone.

"A lot of people that I've come across, they have problems with housing or even just the language," Lackie says. "They don't have a lot of English."

He started the group Inuit of Toronto Urban Katimavvik, or iTUK.

"We decided that we should start an organization to support the Inuit for shelter and for education needs and financial needs."

Lackie believes about 1,300 Inuit are living in Toronto, many of whom could use support.

"How do you apply for funding for post secondary education? Where do you go to look for work? How about housing? We don't have any kind of services like that here in Toronto," Lackie says.

## **'If you build it they will come'**

The new group has been working with an already established organization in Ottawa, called Tungasuvvingat Inuit. It provides social support, career counselling, cultural activities and crisis intervention for Inuit in Ottawa, which is the largest Inuit community outside of the North.

Inuit of Toronto Urban Katimavvik hopes to offer the same array of programming.

"It's one of those, if you build it they will come," Lackie says.

"I think that's why Ottawa has so many different services and that Inuit go to Ottawa because they have several different agencies that provide support."

"Toronto not having any, it's not as attractive. But we're trying to change that."

Lackie says they're applying to become incorporated so the group can get funding from the government. The group worked with Tungasuvvingat Inuit on its business plan.

"We're working on a strategy with them on how we can unite the southern communities so that people coming from the North know where they can go," he says.

"We're trying to develop the network so that it's the same wherever you go, whether you're going to Winnipeg or Montreal or even Toronto."

**Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/inuit-group-toronto-1.3388482>**

## **Tiny house built by Idle No More on way to Saskatchewan**

**'It's been an incredible journey and we're just glad to see it go': Mini Homes builder Anita Munn**

CBC News Posted: Jan 05, 2016 5:26 PM ET Last Updated: Jan 05, 2016 5:30 PM ET



A safe, warm — and unique — home is on its way to a man on the Big River First Nation in northern Saskatchewan, thanks to a group of Idle No More organizers and a Winnipeg company called Mini Homes of Manitoba.

"We're very proud," said Mini Homes co-owner Anita Munn, fighting back tears. "It's been an incredible journey and we're just glad to see it go."

On Tuesday, Munn and her husband Darryl Manuliak put the final touches on the tiny house before it was loaded on a truck to begin the more than 1,000 kilometre, 10-hour drive to the Big River First Nation, north of Saskatoon.

Munn wouldn't identify the person who's receiving the home other than saying they were living in what could be described as a 'shanty' without running water or electricity.



A tiny house constructed by Mini Homes of Manitoba is loaded onto a truck destined for the Big River First Nation in northern Saskatchewan. (Anita Munn)

Winnipeg-based Lee River Transport provided the truck to move the tiny house, just one of many local companies and individuals that were brought together by Idle No More and Mini Houses of Manitoba either free of charge or at a discounted rate.

Organizers from Idle No More initially raised more than \$15,000 to build the energy-efficient, compact mobile house, which was constructed in a Winnipeg warehouse over a four-week period starting in December.

More than 300 people contributed to the crowdfunding campaign, while volunteers chipped in to provide bedding and other household items.

At 16-by-eight feet, it features a kitchen and living area, a bathroom with a composting toilet and radiant floor heating. It also has a solar power system for electricity and a wood stove for added heating.

## Housing crisis

It's welcome news for Big River First Nation housing co-ordinator Leo Jack, who said there simply aren't enough houses for all the community's 3,300 members.

Some of the houses are in disrepair or have toxic mould, Jack said.

The community bought 40 mobile homes this summer but there's still overcrowding and that forces many people to leave the reserve for nearby cities and towns.

Jack said about 270 people are on the waiting list for houses.

## One House, Many Nations

The tiny house is the first of three houses Idle No More committed to building as part of its *One House, Many Nations* campaign.

The group has raised more than \$25,000 for the others but has also teamed up with designers at Harvard University to develop a sustainable and affordable housing construction system.

"They have developed a new type of wood using old pallets," said Idle No More organizer Alex Wilson, who's also a professor at the University of Saskatchewan.

Wilson says they've partnered with the Opaskwéyak Cree Nation in northern Manitoba for the next leg of the *One House, Many Nations* campaign.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/tiny-house-built-by-idle-no-more-on-way-to-saskatchewan-1.3390635>

# Five things to remember about 2015

## Five events that will continue to haunt us in 2016

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, January 05, 2016 - 1:10 pm



Here's the moment when the Conservative patronage machine in Nunavut evaporated — when Liberal candidate Hunter Tootoo crushed Conservative incumbent Leona Aglukkaq in the Oct. 19, 2015 federal election. However it's not yet clear how the victorious Liberals will reconstruct their own patronage system and control the distribution of board appointments, contracts and infrastructure grants. (FILE PHOTO)

### 1. Mining: down but not quite out

Remember mining? A decade ago, federal and territorial governments and most of the Nunavut Inuit leadership touted mining as the great lever that would lift Nunavut out of poverty.

Yes, they paid lip service to tourism, arts and crafts and commercial fishing. But mining was and is the only economic activity that governments and Nunavut Inuit organizations ever got serious about.

And now they're stuck with no Plan B.

Mineral development in Nunavut hasn't quite shriveled up and died. But the events of 2015 confirmed — with one notable exception — that most of it now floats in limbo.

Areva Canada's comatose Kiggavik uranium project is headed nowhere. So is MMG's mothballed Izok Corridor project, along with many other projects hammered by slumping global commodity prices.

Baffinland Iron Mines Corp. cut wages by 10 per cent at its Mary River iron mine and eliminated jobs at its head office in Oakville, Ont. This past May, they told the federal

government that without a dramatic increase in production volumes and 10-month-a year shipping, Mary River can never become viable.

The single exception is gold. Due to cost-cutting and astute planning, Agnico Eagle's Meadowbank mine continues to prosper as it rides out a decline in the price of gold. Two other firms — Sabina and TMAC — are taking their Kitikmeot-based projects into final regulatory hearings this April.

Arctic oil and gas exploration? Forget about it. By year's end, the global crude oil price had fallen to \$37 a barrel. At that price, drillers and anti-drilling activists alike are best advised to stay home.

## **2. Privatized higher education**

Yes, that's what Nunavut got when Nunavut Tunngavik Inc.'s land claims lottery ticket paid off last May, when NTI collected a \$255.5 million settlement from the federal government.

They'll keep \$80.5 million for themselves and use the remaining \$175 million to create a fund that's supposed to train Inuit for government jobs.

NTI, a private corporation, will manage the \$175-million fund through another private corporation called the Nunavut Inuit Training Corp. Since NTI will name five of the training corporation's seven board members, NTI will exercise absolute control over how this fund is invested and spent.

It's intended to pay for a vital public service. But the fund lies entirely within private hands, beyond the reach of public value-for-money audits and evaluations.

So if you're an NTI beneficiary, 2016 would be a good year for you to start asking some rude questions.

## **3. The GN: it still sucks to work there**

No one would dare accuse the Government of Nunavut of ever operating a happy workplace. Remember when Eva Aariak, when running for premier in 2008, promised to combat the "climate of fear?" Even then, a toxic nexus of fear, intimidation and abuse was driving good people out of the territorial public service and creating misery for those who chose to stay.

This year we learned it still sucks to work at the GN, mostly from articles published in this newspaper and from two MLAs who actually want to do something about it.

On top of all that, the GN's more boring dysfunctions continue to fester — such as staffing levels, including an Inuit staffing level that's been stuck at 50 per cent for more than a decade.

Nearly 30 per cent of GN jobs — 1,340 of them — sat vacant as of September 2015. In Iqaluit, where Inuit comprise only 35 per cent of the GN's workforce, 591 GN jobs are unfilled.

The much-maligned Qulliq Energy Corp. actually enjoys the best staffing record: 91 per cent of its jobs are filled. The Department of Health, as always, owns the worst record: only 51 per cent of its funded positions are filled.

Without enough people around to do the available work, it's hard to imagine the GN will ever fix its workplace problems any time soon.

#### **4. The death of the Conservative patronage machine**

For the past seven years, Nunavut's ex-MP, Leona Aglukkaq, reigned unopposed as the Conservative government's political boss for northern Canada, especially after 2011, when she became minister responsible for the Canadian Economic Development Agency.

But in one of the most memorable elections in recent times, the voters tossed her out and Nunavut leaders must now learn to bow and scrape before a new set of bosses — and they're all Liberals.

It's not yet clear how Justin Trudeau's government will distribute board appointments, contracts, infrastructure grants and favours throughout northern Canada, and who will call the shots for them.

We know that Navdeep Bains, Liberal MP for Mississauga-Malton and minister in charge of a ponderously entitled portfolio called Innovation, Science and Economic Development, is now minister responsible for CanNor. But will the Liberals maintain CanNor's pretend head office in Iqaluit? And how much influence will northern Canada's three Liberal MPs exert over northern policy?

The last question is crucial. Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's finance minister, Bill Morneau, will likely attempt to stimulate the economy in his spring budget by doling out unprecedented amounts of infrastructure money. At the same time, Trudeau's caucus is dominated by inner city and suburban MPs from southern Canada, many of whom are unfamiliar with the North.

#### **5. Get used to it: real action on climate change**

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Environment Minister Catherine McKenna and the huge delegation they brought with them made a big splash in Paris last month at the COP21 conference on climate change — and did much to restore Canada's tattered reputation on that issue.

But the Trudeau delegation went to Paris armed only with Aglukkaq's greenhouse gas emissions target, which she announced this past May: a commitment to reduce Canada's

emissions to a level 30 per cent below Canada's 2005 levels, by the year 2030. That "Intended Nationally Determined Contribution," devised by the Conservatives, is still Canada's formal policy.

The Liberals are now promising, more or less, that a more ambitious climate change plan will likely emerge later this year after meetings with territorial and provincial premiers. Ready or not, Nunavut will be part of it. **JB**

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674five\\_things\\_to\\_remember\\_about\\_2015/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674five_things_to_remember_about_2015/)

## **Firefighting capabilities on First Nations 'appalling'**

By [Alan S. Hale](#), The Daily Press

Wednesday, January 6, 2016 10:22:59 EST AM



TIMMINS - People living on reserves are 10 times as likely to die in a house fire than people living in the rest of Canada. That was one of the findings of an internal report conducted by the federal government in 2011 – but which was made public only recently.

The 2011 report examining insurance coverage for First Nations communities, obtained by The Canadian Press through Access to Information legislation, found only 56% of First Nation sites across Canada have adequate fire protection — most because they depend on a neighbouring municipality.

"The number of fire-related deaths in First Nations is also a major concern," the consultant's report said. "The fire death rates in First Nations are substantially higher than those off reserve."

The report found that fire incidence rates for First Nations are 2.4 times higher than for the rest of Canada. First Nations residents are also 10 times more likely to die in a house fire.

One of the primary reasons for the deaths is decreased reaction time by firefighters.

In Timmins, when the call of a fire comes in, the city's professional firefighters stationed at the fire hall are often off to the location within a minute or two.

On many reserves in Canada, they either do not have fire departments of their own and must wait for them to arrive from a neighbouring municipality, or they rely on a volunteer force that must get from wherever they are to the fire hall before being able to respond to the blaze itself.

The latter is the case in the Mattagami First Nation, where they have a fire station and a fire truck, but no one is staffed at the station to respond immediately.

Mattagami band councillor Jennifer Constant said the community would like to change that, but the band doesn't have the money to pay for it.

"Yes we have a fire department, but without more funding you can't expect someone to be there all the time," she said. "For most fire houses, you need at least one or two people working around the clock for it to be effective. The team also has to be engaged and their training has to be up to date, or have access to more training so they can be better equipped."

"Unfortunately, we don't have that."

Reserves rely too much on volunteers who aren't properly trained to protect homes that are dilapidated and not built to code, the government report found.

There is also a high attrition rate and volunteers don't "adequately serve the public interest," it added.

Constant said she believes they have a good team of volunteers in Mattagami, but getting the resources necessary to improving the fire department is tough.

"Whenever we talk about the fact that we need funding for certain things, the government comes back and says, 'Well, you have the money for it in your band support funding.'"

While it may be true that the federal government does provide money for firefighting inside First Nations, Constant argues that historically this money has not been sufficient.

"It's there in theory. But is it sufficient? No," said the band council member.

When she was the federal Liberals indigenous affairs critic, Carolyn Bennett called federal funding for fire protection services "appalling."

Now as indigenous affairs minister, Bennett said the report's findings are "not acceptable."

First Nations need better fire prevention tools and adequate housing, as well as the ability to fight fires when they break out, Bennett said.

"We think there are far too many First Nations families living in homes that other Canadians wouldn't be subject to," Bennett said in an interview. "This is a goal for all of us and for all Canadians — they don't think that First Nations people should be living in third-world conditions."

With files from The Canadian Press

**Direct Link:** <http://www.timminspress.com/2016/01/06/firefighting-capabilities-on-first-nations-appalling>

## **Canada's Ice Roads Are Melting — And That Is Terrible News for Aboriginal Communities**

By *Hilary Beaumont*

January 6, 2016 | 1:15 pm

Aboriginal chiefs in Canada are blaming climate change for water and food shortages on their reserves this winter.

Isolated reserves in northern Ontario rely on ice roads to transport supplies in the winter, but warmer weather means those roads haven't frozen yet, so food and water are in short supply.

"Everything you can imagine," Rosemary McKay, Chief of Bearskin Lake First Nation, told VICE News. "They're running out of food and anything they need in their home. Sugar, tea, flour, you name it."

Bearskin Lake First Nation's winter road is typically thick enough at this time of year for trucks to cross, but the ice is unseasonably thin and only skidoos are able to make the crossing right now.

Because it lacks a year-round access road, in the warmer months, water, food, fuel and other supplies are flown into Bearskin Lake. That also makes them more expensive to buy at the community's northern store. People look forward to the winter months when

these supplies are transported over the winter road, making them cheaper, McKay explained.

"I'm really concerned with everything that's happening," McKay said about the condition of the winter road. "We shouldn't even have to buy water."

The thinness of the ice road is exacerbating the existing problem of lack of clean water in Bearskin Lake. Like [93 other](#) First Nations across Canada, excluding British Columbia, they are currently under "boil water" and "do not consume" advisories, meaning they rely on bottled water deliveries.

Ontario Regional Chief Isadore Day said the problem of melting ice roads is widespread across Ontario, and he's heard similar complaints from First Nations in Manitoba.

"You could travel the entire north on these roads, however you can't do that now," he said of northern Ontario.

He blames climate change for the ice road conditions.

Historically these winter roads are functional 70 to 80 days out of the year, but now their duration is as little as 28 days, he said. Supplies aren't the only concern — he also worries about the social impact on families who can't visit each other in the winter. Some of those communities, including Bearskin Lake, have declared crisis situations due to high levels of suicide, and he worries there will be a social cost to the melting roads.

For Bearskin Lake, it's not the first winter that the ice road has been delayed, prompting questions about how to prepare for the years to come.

"If I can't have a winter road, what's it going to be [like] for my grandchildren?" McKay said.

"We're going to have to build an all-season road, that's the only way."

She's looking forward to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's promise of big infrastructure investments, calling the new government "a ray of light."

**Direct Link:** <https://news.vice.com/article/canadas-ice-roads-are-melting-and-that-is-terrible-news-for-aboriginal-communities>

# Inuit residence evacuated because of carbon monoxide

BY SAM COOLEY, OTTAWA SUN

FIRST POSTED: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 06, 2016 08:52 PM EST |

UPDATED: WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 06, 2016 08:58 PM EST



Fire officials say eighty occupants of an Inuit residence on Richmond Rd. were evacuated because employees left a car running inside a garage all day on Wednesday, Jan. 6, 2016 SAM COOLEY / OTTAWA SUN / POSTMEDIA NETWORK

A residence for Inuit travelers was evacuated Wednesday after the manager called in the city's fire department because of carbon monoxide alarms going off.

Larga Baffin on Richmond Rd., hosts Inuit from the Baffin region of Nunavut requiring medical attention.

But on Wednesday fire officials say 80 occupants of the gated residence were evacuated and sheltered in OC Transpo buses while investigators figured out what was going on.

Fire investigators "discovered readings of up to 75 ppm (of carbon monoxide) on the lower level of the building.

The company was cleaning the garage floor and employees left a vehicle running inside the building all day, along with a propane-fuelled "hot water cleaner", according to fire officials, who determined these two sources were the cause of the CO.

No injuries were reported as of Wednesday night.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ottawasun.com/2016/01/06/inuit-residence-evacuated-because-of-carbon-monoxide>

## **Parks Canada, First Nations take down trapper's cabin in Wood Buffalo National Park**

**Mikisew Cree man built on shore of Pine Lake, against park rules and without consulting local First Nations**

CBC News Posted: Jan 07, 2016 7:32 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 07, 2016 7:32 AM CT



Robert Grandjambe Jr. started building a cabin more than a year ago on the south side of Pine Lake, a recreation area in Wood Buffalo National Park. (submitted)

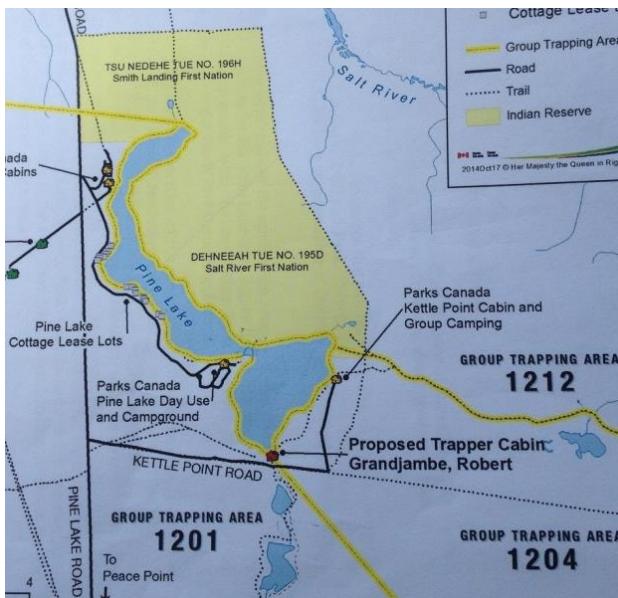
A Fort Chipewyan, Alta., trapper is looking at options after a cabin he built in Wood Buffalo National Park was taken down by order of Parks Canada and two nearby First Nations.

Robert Grandjambe Jr. started building a cabin more than a year ago on the south side of Pine Lake, a recreation area in Wood Buffalo National Park, which straddles the N.W.T.-Alberta border.

Grandjambe is Mikisew Cree and a fourth generation trapper. He says he chose the location because there hasn't been trapping in the area for the last 20 years.

"I want to continue my traditional ways of practising, exercising," he says.

"Being out on the land, trapping, harvesting is essential. And to bring in the education portion where I can bring in students, it's accessible year around."



A map shows the location of Robert Grandejambe's cabin in relation to Pine Lake, trapping areas and the Salt River and Smith's Landing First Nation lands. (submitted)

And that's the problem. The site is just off an access road in the middle of a recreation use-only area.

Under Parks Canada rules that means no harvesting cabins allowed. On top of that, the Smith's Landing and Salt River First Nations say they were not properly consulted. The two groups held a meeting and decided to take the cabin down.

Grandejambe wasn't at the meeting.

"I had no formal paperwork. I had no invitation," he says.

"And so Parks Canada uses it as ammo now, says that 'you were not attendant to this meeting.' So they tear down my cabin while I'm out trapping on my traditional lands."

He says the cabin wouldn't interfere with anyone else who wants to use the area.



Robert Grandejambe built his cabin on the southern point of Pine Lake in Wood Buffalo National Park.  
(submitted)

"They can use the hiking path while I'm there, it's just I only want a night, overnight access while I'm attending my traps. I'm not a hindrance to the two nations on the lake."

Parks Canada says it warned Grandejambe to stop work on the cabin.

"We tried to work with him," says Jonah Mitchell with Parks Canada.

"We started 18 months ago now almost... working with him on finding alternative locations that weren't on the Pine Lake shoreline. Mr. Grandejambe wasn't receptive to looking at any other locations."

Parks Canada says it's still willing to help Grandejambe find another location for his cabin.

Grandejambe says he's reaching out to the local First Nations to try and resolve the issue as soon as possible.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/trappers-cabin-wood-buffalo-park-1.3392811>

## Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

### Reporter's Notebook: A mother's grief laid bare at Thunder Bay inquest

**First Nations student deaths inquest exposes deep wounds, need for healing**

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 03, 2016 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 03, 2016 7:00 AM ET



The seven students who died in Thunder Bay between 2000 and 2011 are, from top left, Jethro Anderson, 15, Curran Strang, 18, Paul Panacheese, 17, Robyn Harper, 18, Reggie Bushie, 15, Kyle Morriseau, 17, and Jordan Wabasse, 15. (CBC)

The sound of Stella Anderson's crying filled the tiny room where I was sitting next to her.

Her sobs rocked her body. As she put her head down, her tears dropped to the floor — so many there were wet splotches on the carpet.

I stopped my tape recorder, feeling uncomfortably guilty. I was asking about the death of her son, Jethro, back in 2000.

Jethro is one of seven students who died after leaving their homes in remote First Nations in northern Ontario to attend high school in Thunder Bay. Their deaths are the subject of one of the largest inquests in Ontario's history and the focus of my work for the past several months.

The inquest began in October 2015 and is expected to run until March 2016. Each family that testifies at the inquest provides a fresh lesson in loss and how it ravages relationships and personal lives.

Stella Anderson lost her ability to hear on the day her son was found dead.



Stella Anderson, right, says the First Nations student deaths inquest made it feel like her son Jethro's death in 2000 'just happened yesterday.' Her sister Saloma Anderson, left, also testified. (Jody Porter/CBC)

"I fell on the floor. It was so painful I thought I was going to die," Stella told inquest jurors on Nov. 3. "The pain was so great I truly thought I was going to die."

The last thing she heard clearly with her own ears was the news that her son's body had been found in the Kaministiquia River in Thunder Bay.

He had just turned 15 years old, far away from his home in Kasabonika Lake First Nation in northwestern Ontario. He had been missing in Thunder Bay, nearly 600 kilometres south of Kasabonika, for more than a week.

Stella Anderson testified at the inquest using a hearing aid and an Oji-Cree interpreter. She spoke to me afterwards in English so plain and clear each sentence was a gift of insight, wrapped tight in pent up emotion.

"It's like it happened yesterday, like I'm repeating looking for my son, expecting to see him," she said.

The stories of Paul Panacheese, Robyn Harper, Reggie Bushie, Curran Strang, Kyle Morriseau and Jordan Wabasse are equally heartbreaking.

## Little choice

Parents hoping for a brighter future for their children in remote First Nations in northern Ontario have told the inquest they had little choice but to send their children hundreds of kilometres away to the nearest high school.

Few can afford to move to the city with their children, so the students live in boarding homes among strangers who know little about them, their families or their culture.

The bodies of five of the boys were found in rivers flowing through Thunder Bay. There has been little evidence to suggest how any of them got in the water. Kyle Morriseau's body was pulled from the McIntyre River in 2009.



Christian Morriseau says from residential schools to modern day, education is still hurting First Nations people. His son Kyle Morriseau died in Thunder Bay in 2009. (CBC)

"Education is still hurting our people today as it did in the past," said his father Christian Morriseau, testifying at the inquest during the same week the final report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission into residential schools was released.

Morriseau drew a line from residential schools to his son's death to the epidemic of missing and murdered indigenous women, saying he believes Kyle died as a "spiritual sacrifice" so others could see those connections.

Surely unresolved grief is a thread weaving through the residential school legacy to this inquest to the anticipated national public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

It's a deep wound unimaginable to many Canadians, a pain so unbearable many of us may be tempted to reach for a quick fix.

Certainly, the many days at the inquest have left me antsy, impatient, starving for a solution.

Will someone produce a step-by-step guide to keeping First Nations students safe in the city?

Can someone give us a template for how to keep indigenous women and girls safe, wherever they live?

Will an expert show up soon and tell us what is needed to make all the pain stop?

## **Finding wisdom**

When my impatience reaches its peak, I lean on the wisdom I received in that cramped room with Stella Anderson. Her sister Saloma Anderson was there, too.

When Stella began to cry, not quietly as she had done for several days in the courtroom, but wailing, like a siren, my first instinct was to dig in my bag for a tissue. It distracted me from overwhelming sadness and made me feel useful. The solution for tears is a tissue, right?

Saloma stopped me, with advice she said came from the elders.

"If you give her that, it sends the message to stop," Saloma said. "Then she will hold everything inside."

So I sat still and accepted the sound a mother makes after hearing the details of her child's death for the first time in 15 years.

It was the raw sound of mourning amplified by more than a decade of wondering how and why it happened.

It is a pain that Canadians may need to become more open to hearing for there to be any hope of healing.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/reporters-notebook-thunder-bay-inquest-first-nations-students-1.3383148>

## **First Nations woman sues Ontario for injuries caused by police**

## **Bonnie Muckuck of Mishkeegogamang First Nation had her shoulder broken in 2013 altercation with OPP**

By Jody Porter, CBC News Posted: Jan 05, 2016 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 05, 2016 7:00 AM ET



A woman from Mishkeegogamang First Nation is seeking \$2 million in damages from Ontario after a 2013 altercation with two Ontario Provincial Police officers in Pickle Lake, Ont., left her with a broken shoulder and ribs.

Bonnie Muckuck, 55, is also suing the provincial police for \$2 million. The civil actions were filed separately in Ontario Superior Court, but will proceed together, according to Muckuck's lawyer.

Muckuck was found not guilty last June of assaulting police during the 2013 altercation, in which she was injured. She was also found not guilty of assault on her partner, a complaint that led to her contact with police.

The judge in the assault case ruled that the injuries to Muckuck, whom he described as "frail and bird-like", were caused by police at the time of her arrest.

In addition to the damages, Muckuck is seeking a declaration that her charter rights were infringed upon, according to the statement of claim against Ontario, filed in Superior Court in December.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-woman-sues-ontario-for-injuries-caused-by-police-1.3388596>

## **Aboriginal inmates in Regina to go on hunger strike over 'gross' jail food**

National News | January 5, 2016 by Kenneth Jackson



**Kenneth Jackson**  
**APTN National News**

After being hit with a hunger strike before Christmas the Regina Correctional Centre is about to be hit with another.

Inmates on the remand wing of the prison have organized a hunger strike to begin Thursday at 8 a.m.

Kenneth Morrison from the Muscowpetung First Nation in Saskatchewan said he can no longer stomach the food.

“We’re going to send our food back,” said Morrison, 27, in a telephone interview from the jail with APTN National News Tuesday. “We’re going to start sending all the trays back … the meat is either uncooked or smells.”

He said he and about 100 other inmates have signed a petition to join the strike and many are Aboriginal peoples.

Morrison, who is on Unit 1C awaiting trial on assault, possession of stolen property and breaches, said the food is prepared by an outside company and delivered to the inmates on trays with a cart, which he is in charge of.

He said the cart is dirty and “smells like a garbage truck.”

It’s not the first time the RCC has been hit with an inmate hunger strike.

Inmates from another wing of RCC organized a strike Dec. 19 lasting a few days after the province said they spoke to the company hired to supply the food – Compass Group – beginning in November.

Concerns about the food have had raised by inmates after Compass took over and a petition with a list of demands was submitted to prison management on Nov. 18.

“I just think that this is inhumane what they’re serving us. I wouldn’t serve this to my dog and what they’re doing is wrong and enough is enough,” Forrest Pelletier, an inmate serving time for break and enter and possession of a weapon, said at the time.

Justice Department spokesman Drew Wilby said in December officials were looking into the matter.

“We are about six weeks into that (new contract) now and we expected some challenges of course, with any transition like that there will be some challenges,” Wilby said.

“We have addressed some of those concerns with Compass Group and continue to do so and we’re confident that we will be able to find a solution and make sure those high quality meals are being provided across the province.”

Wilby told APTN Tuesday the department can’t comment on what may happen but is confident Compass can address food quality challenges, as with any transition period there is going to be bumps. He said Compass is responsible for eight institutions and there have been complaints from others as well.

The Saskatchewan NDP jumped on the issue at the time accusing the SaskParty government of “risking public safety in order to pursue privatization.”

“Saskatchewan families also don’t want to see a flood of inmates needing medical care as a result of spoiled or raw food,” NDP central services critic Warren McCall said in December.

The Saskatchewan Government and General Employees Union warned there would be issues with privatizing food services in prisons.

“These trays of food are being sent back and new trays being brought forward,” union president Bob Bymoen said. “Who’s billing for the new trays, is the government paying for the additional trays of food? In the contract, if they order additional trays of food they have to pay for it, so are we paying twice to feed the same people?”

Bymoen said he hoped the government rethinks its decision.

“With Compass they have a chance to review this and own up to their mistakes and get out of this contract in a year and they should seriously be looking at that..” he said.

Wilby said the government has no intention of reversing its decision and will honour the five-year contract signed with Compass in November as it will save the province an estimated \$12 million over life of the contract.

A spokeswoman for Compass said they are “investigating and addressing all comments regarding our operations” at RCC.

That includes daily meetings with its operations teams to reinforce proper cooking and food handling said Saira Husain, manager of communications.

“We are in contact with our client on an ongoing basis to ensure that we can resolve this situation as quickly as possible,” said Husain.

Morrison said the inmates on his wing are demanding to go back to the old system before Compass was hired.

“It’s constantly getting worse,” said Morrison. “They were sending lettuce that was brown. Nothing has been digestible.”

On Tuesday, Morrison and the other inmates on his wing were given macaroni.

“The macaroni was cold. I could cut cubes out of it with my fork,” he said, adding most of the guys sent the food back without eating it.

A call to the director of RCC hasn’t been returned.

**Direct Link:** <http://aptn.ca/news/2016/01/05/aboriginal-inmates-in-regina-to-go-on-hunger-strike-over-gross-jail-food/>

## **Aboriginal Education & Youth**

### **Motherisk commission must heed aboriginal concerns, lawyer says**

**'Unreliable' hair strand tests for drugs and alcohol used in thousands of child welfare cases**

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 04, 2016 7:30 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 04, 2016 7:30 AM ET



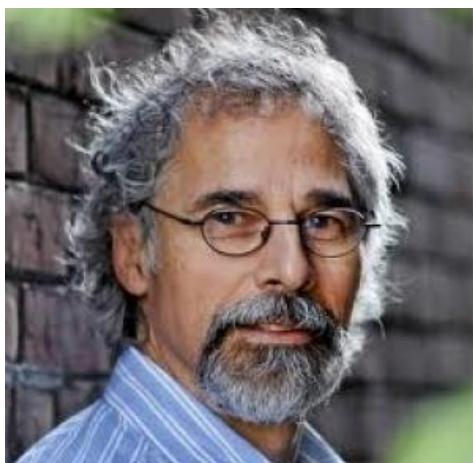
A report reviewing a controversial drug-testing program shut down this year at SickKids has found it was "inadequate and unreliable." (Queen's Park)

Aboriginal families need special consideration as Ontario sets up an independent commission into the Motherisk drug and alcohol testing program, according to Aboriginal Legal Services.

A review released by the province in December showed the Motherisk laboratory produced flawed results for tests done on hair strands in thousands of child welfare cases across the province.

Aboriginal Legal Service, an agency that provides legal-related programs in Toronto, says at least one quarter of the families affected by the Motherisk program are aboriginal.

"We have concerns that people will be harmed, that people will make exaggerated statements about what might come out of this [independent commission]," said program director Jonathan Rudin.



Jonathan Rudin is the program director at Aboriginal Legal Services Toronto (Osgood Hall Law School)

Last year's independent review found that between 2005 and 2015 the Motherisk lab was "inadequate and unreliable" and did not meet internationally recognized forensic standards.

It also found the lab's hair testing evidence in child protection proceedings has serious implications for the fairness of those proceedings.

The province said it is now moving quickly to establish an independent commission.

While needed, the commission could be especially traumatizing for aboriginal families, Rudin said.

"Aboriginal people who have not only lost their children through child welfare but probably have a history of involvement in child welfare and likely residential schools — all those issues need to be considered," he said.

Aboriginal Legal Services wrote a letter to the Minister responsible for the commission expressing the need for supports specifically for aboriginal families.

"We want these things considered right off the top," Rudin said. "We think it's really important to get this right from the beginning, rather than try to fix things as we go along."

Ontario is providing a toll-free number for anyone who may be "potentially impacted" by the flawed Motherisk lab results.

"Anyone who believes that they may have been impacted by a Motherisk test can call 1-855-235-8932 for short-term counselling assistance and to request that their name be provided to the commissioner," Attorney General Madeleine Meilleur said in a news release.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/motherisk-commission-must-heed-aboriginal-concerns-lawyer-says-1.3385836>

## **Ernie Crey says childhood in foster care inspired 'life-long mission'**

**It's time for aboriginal communities to take responsibility for their own children, says lifelong advocate**

By The Early Edition, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 04, 2016 9:16 AM PT Last Updated: Jan 04, 2016 9:16 AM PT



Ernie Crey has spent the past 40 years advocating for the rights of aboriginal people, including the time he spent in the tent city at Oppenheimer Park in the summer of 2014. (Wawmeesh Hamilton)

The new chief councillor of the **Cheam First Nation** says his plan to help his community reduce the number of its children in government care is inspired by his own experience in foster care during the 1960s.

Ernie Crey was taken from the Cheam First Nation as a boy and placed into foster care in what is now known as the 'Sixties Scoop,' when the provinces took over child protection on reserves from the then-Department of Indian and Northern Affairs.

That was the start of bad times for children in many aboriginal communities in Canada, and the time has come to turn that legacy around, says Crey

"In our community, as is true for many many aboriginal communities in Canada, certainly in B.C. and my home territory, the bands themselves, the communities, have to take greater responsibility for their children," he said.

"And that's what we're gearing up to do in my community — reduce the number of children in care."

Crey has previously worked as a councillor in the Cheam First Nation. He was elected chief councillor of the band last month.

## **Returning as chief councillor**

Crey says being elected chief councillor in the home he was forced to leave as a child "means a great deal" to him.

He remembers carefree days in the Cheam community, foraging for hops with his relatives.

"It was a very small tight-knit community. I knew that literally everyone there was a relative, an aunt, a cousin. I was related to everyone in the community."

He says fewer people on the reserve relied on the government for economic aid back then.

"Back in that era, there was full employment for aboriginal people. There was very little welfare."

But when his father died, Crey became part of the first wave of aboriginal children in Canada to be taken from their communities and put into foster care. He says that experience influenced his entire career as an advocate for aboriginal rights.

"It's really shaped my life and also propelled me along his path to become concerned with human rights, with the welfare and well-being of aboriginal families and children — and to pursue things that I feel, would contribute to improving the social and economic circumstances of our communities so that we see less and less of this removal of children."

He says this position may in fact be a career-topper for him.

"I've tried to be first and foremost, self-respecting and respecting of others and to try as best I can to do good things in the community, so you might say it was a bit of a lifelong mission for me."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/ernie-crey-chief-councillor-cheam-1.3388503>

## **Inuit adopted kids fare better than non-adopted peers: research**

**Custom adopted Nunavimmiut tend to live in more stable homes**

NUNATSIAQ NEWS, January 04, 2016 - 4:00 pm



While adopted children in other parts of Northern America tend to display more behavioural problems their

non-adopted peers, a new study found Inuit customary adoption was unrelated to behavioural problems in Nunavik schools. (PHOTO BY SARAH ROGERS)

While North American studies have shown adopted children display more negative behaviour than their non-adopted peers, that's not the case among Nunavik children, a study by Quebec-based researchers has found.

Health researchers at Université Laval, Université de Montréal and Wayne State University in Detroit looked at the impacts of Inuit customary adoption on the behaviour of school-age children in Nunavik's three largest communities.

The research, published earlier this year in the American Journal of Orthopsychiatry, found Inuit customary adoption was unrelated to behavioural problems in school.

Those problems include attention deficits, self-directed behavioural issues such as difficulty coping with negative emotions, and externalizing behavioural problems such as aggression, delinquency and hyperactivity.

The study followed some 270 children in Nunavik from birth until they were about 14, looking at prenatal health, family variables and teachers' reports.

The research noted that both adopted and non-adopted Inuit children followed in the study were exposed to prenatal risk factors associated with behavioral issues.

For example, about half of those children were exposed prenatally to alcohol and roughly 80 per cent to tobacco.

But the study found the home environments of adopted and non-adopted children differed substantially, with the adoptive homes considered to be more stable overall.

“The adopted children were raised by older and less educated caregivers, who were more likely to be dependent on public assistance and to be single (separated, divorced, or widowed”), the study said.

“However, they were less likely to live in families experiencing maternal depressive mood, family violence, alcohol consumption, and household crowding.”

That finding supports research done through Nunavik's youth protection services in the mid-1990s that followed adopted and non-adopted clients. It found adoptive parents were significantly older and more likely to abstain from using alcohol and drugs.

According to this more recent research, 17 per cent of adopted Inuit children and adopted by their grandmother; 32 per cent by an aunt and 24 per cent by another relative.

Researchers note some of the differences in Inuit custom adoption and the adoption process in other western societies that could explain why adopted Inuit children seem to fare better than their southern counterparts.

First, giving a child away for Inuit customary adoption is not based on an assumption that birth parents are unfit to care for their children.

Inuit children are generally adopted at birth and those arrangements are made with the adoptive family during the pregnancy.

Secondly, birth ties are maintained and the adopted child knows who his or her biological parents are and in many cases, has contact with them.

Finally, the study acknowledged that Inuit customary adoption is much less stigmatizing than adoption in other Western societies.

But the study calls for more research to look at how much adopted Inuit children's contact with their biological parents could play into their well-being.

Researchers also say the study should be expanded to look at adopted children's progress through to their late adolescence, using self-reported measures in addition to teachers' reports.

**Direct Link:**

[http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit\\_adopted\\_children\\_fare\\_better\\_b\\_ehaviourally\\_than\\_non-adopted\\_peer/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674inuit_adopted_children_fare_better_b_ehaviourally_than_non-adopted_peer/)

## **Man. Aboriginal leader drops lawsuit against teacher who over racist Facebook comment**



Manitoba Grand Chief Derek Nepinak addresses the First Nations Elections Act, in Ottawa, on Tuesday, Nov. 19, 2013 in Ottawa. (THE CANADIAN PRESS/Adrian Wyld)

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Steve Lambert, The Canadian Press  
Published Tuesday, January 5, 2016 5:20PM EST

WINNIPEG -- A Manitoba indigenous leader has dropped a lawsuit against a high school teacher over Facebook comments that called aborigines lazy.

Grand Chief Derek Nepinak of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs said Tuesday he received an apology from Brad Badiuk during a mediation ceremony the two attended, helped by an elder.

"We employed some traditional ceremonial methodology in terms of sitting down and resolving the issue," Nepinak said.

"It was basically a circle where we sat down with our medicines, we did prayer and we had an exchange of ideas. Brad had the opportunity to share some of the issues that I think perhaps contributed to the way he conveyed himself on social media."

Badiuk, a technology teacher at Kelvin High School in Winnipeg, was placed on leave more than a year ago, after comments were posted on his Facebook page that accused First Nations people of being lazy and seeking free money from non-aboriginals. Some of the comments were directed specifically at Nepinak and suggested he wanted to "get his hands" on other people's money.

The comments made national headlines and were denounced by people including Murray Sinclair, head of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

Nepinak filed a statement of claim that alleged the comments defamed all indigenous persons.

The Winnipeg School Division investigated the matter and has consistently refused to release any details on how it dealt with Badiuk. His name does not appear on the current staff list at Kelvin.

"We are committed to providing a safe and inclusive working and learning environment for all of our students and our staff," division spokesperson Radean Carter wrote in an email Tuesday.

"As such, we believe all (division) staff have the right to confidentiality. Therefore, we have no further information to share on this issue at this time."

Attempts to reach Badiuk were unsuccessful. His Facebook page was taken down soon after the comments came to light.

Nepinak said Badiuk agreed to learn more about aboriginal history.

"I was satisfied that there was sincerity in how Mr. Badiuk approached the issue and we walked away from the courtroom without actually having to go there," he said.

"I believe that, as part of reconciliation, we have to recognize oftentimes that going straight to the courtroom -- or into a litigation environment where we lawyer up -- is not always going to lead to resolutions that are going to satisfy all parties involved."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/man-aboriginal-leader-drops-lawsuit-against-teacher-who-over-racist-facebook-comment-1.2724851>

## **The Need For A Mandatory Course In Indigenous Studies**

Moral and social context compel action by universities



Graphic by Kelly Campbell

**BY TARIQ SOHAIL ON JANUARY 5, 2016**

Quite a bit of discussion has been happening about the prospect of introducing a mandatory indigenous studies course into university curriculums across Canada – including at the University of Manitoba.

Pressure to make an indigenous studies course mandatory stems from the historic Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) report. In this report, there are calls to action for Canada to implement in order to “redress the legacy of residential schools and advance the process of Canadian reconciliation.”

The University of Winnipeg and Lakehead University (in Thunder Bay, Ont.) have already implemented this requirement university-wide, and the University of Regina currently mandates all students in the faculty of arts to take an indigenous course as well.

The University of Manitoba Students’ Union’s recent survey asked students if they supported an indigenous studies course requirement. However, this course should be a requirement regardless of whether students support it or not.

The reasons for such a course requirement are many. The first and foremost is that this is recommended in the TRC report. Prime Minister Trudeau has already committed to implementing all 94 calls to action contained in the report. Keeping these important considerations in mind, the merits of a mandatory indigenous studies course requirement for all U of M students should be viewed through the lens of Canada's history.

Between 1850 and 1970 one third of Aboriginal children in Canada spent the majority of their childhoods in residential schools as part of the Canadian government's policy of aggressive assimilation. This policy of assimilation was assisted by missionaries from the Anglican, Roman Catholic, and Methodist churches seeking the conversion of Aboriginal people to Christianity through education.

The TRC report tries to address the devastating legacy left behind by the residential schools with its 94 calls to action. An indigenous studies course would go some way toward educating future generations of Canadians on the legacy of the residential schools and leave them with a sense of appreciation for Aboriginal culture.

Why is that important? Why not study other cultures that were oppressed in Canada? No other cultural group has been systematically discriminated against since Canada's founding to the extent that Aboriginal peoples have. Their children were rounded up and put in schools where their cultural identity was violently forced out of them. This destroyed the family structure within Aboriginal communities, who are now facing the long-term social effects of such a discriminatory policy.

Another point is that Aboriginal people are fundamental to the socio-economic fabric of Canada. The Aboriginal population is set to grow between 1.1 per cent and 2.3 per cent annually by 2036, higher than the projected national growth rate of 0.9 per cent. It makes sense, given Canada's history of neglecting Aboriginal communities, that we as a society should come to develop understanding of their cultural identity and appreciate what they have to offer to Canada.

However, there have been criticisms of imposing a mandatory indigenous studies course at the University of Winnipeg and the possibility of something similar at the U of M. Almost all arguments against the course requirement have no rational basis to begin with.

One argument is that students pay for their education and so should not be forced to take courses that aren't relevant to their major, as students are already strapped for cash. Being a student myself, I sympathize with the affordability part and understand that students have limited budgets. However, students are often required to take courses that won't ever be used in the real world – you have to take them anyway, so you pay your dues to get that degree.

Undergraduate studies are partly about obtaining an education that makes you a well-rounded candidate for the job market. Although this outcome is important, there are other equally important outcomes that one derives from university education. For example, the courses that you won't use in your future career often challenge you on an intellectual

level, grow you as a person, and ultimately make you a better citizen. The indigenous course requirement would do exactly that. It would challenge people's long-held belief and stereotypes and ultimately make people better citizens.

Another argument is that the university senate's main role is to accept or reject suggestions on new course requirements, rather than impose. Departments are content experts and should be the only one proposing mandatory course requirements. However, the senate does have the power to propose and impose mandatory course requirements as it pleases. Departments may be content experts but they are not experts in what the nation and society needs. Canada is in a process of national healing and departments, rightly so, are concerned only with their respective disciplines.

Furthermore, there are already mandatory course requirements imposed on all undergraduate students that attend University of Manitoba – English and math. What practical good is math for someone majoring in classical studies or theatre?

The idea behind the mandatory English and math requirement seems quite easy to understand. If the general population is more educated, it makes for a more productive and prosperous society. English and math are essential subjects that everyone should understand, as they are used every day in society regardless of field or discipline.

Let's be clear: this is not a "progressive" issue. It is an issue of national concern. There are many issues that are progressive but this is far from it. It's wrong to see this issue politicized and presented as if only one segment of the political spectrum demands it.

The argument for having a mandatory indigenous studies requirement stems from our moral obligation to remedy past wrongs done to Aboriginal communities. After a long time in Canadian history, we have the opportunity to correct the past by creating and building a more tolerant and equitable society. It's time to get this right and we must not fail.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.themanitoban.com/2016/01/the-need-for-a-mandatory-course-in-indigenous-studies/26429/>

## **Manitoba boosts funding for indigenous students in the province**

**Education Minister James Allum says move helps fulfil Truth and Reconciliation recommendations**

CBC News Posted: Jan 06, 2016 8:16 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 07, 2016 11:14 AM CT



The province is increasing funds directed at indigenous students by more than \$1 million and releasing data about their achievement, Education Minister James Allum announced on Wednesday.

"Many indigenous students in our public schools are not experiencing the success that they deserve," Allum said in a provincial news release.



Education Minister James Allum announced more than \$1 million in new funding directed at indigenous education on Wednesday. (CBC) (Tyson Koschik/CBC)

"We want every student in Manitoba to have the opportunity to excel, and we are committed to working with teachers, parents, schools and First Nations partners to see this happen."

Manitoba has a new website that will make data on academic achievement, broken down by gender and self-identified indigenous pupils, available for the first time, said the release.

"The Truth and Reconciliation Commission's final report makes clear that there is an achievement gap for indigenous students across Canada, and in Manitoba, we're committed to making targeted investments and doing our part to close this gap," said Allum.

Along with open data, Manitoba will boost funds specifically targeted to indigenous students in the province, including:

- \$500,000 in new funding to provide transition supports for students leaving First Nations schools to attend public schools;
- \$500,000 to help indigenous students with literacy, math and culturally appropriate learning through the Aboriginal Academic Achievement grant; and
- more money for the Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative, a group that seeks to improve elementary and secondary school education outcomes for indigenous Canadians, bringing funding for the organization to \$375,000.



Students at R. B. Russell School listen to the province's funding announcement. (Tyson Koschik/CBC)

"Raising the academic results of our most disadvantaged students is good for our entire province, as it will raise the results of all," said James Wilson, Treaty Relations Commission Manitoba commissioner, in the provincial release.

"Only by increasing measurement can we hope to increase outcomes, which is why the TRCM supports this mainstream education effort as a means to self-reliance first recognized in the numbered treaties," he said.

The Aboriginal Council of Winnipeg's president, Damon Johnston, spoke to students at R.B. Russell Vocational School about the meaning of Wednesday's announcement.

Johnston, who is a member of Ontario's Fort William First Nation, went to high school in Manitoba in the 1960s.

"I can tell you ... I don't think I ever [saw] indigenous art on the wall," he said, standing beside aboriginal artwork hanging on the school's wall.

"This is a real example of the change that is occurring."



Johnston applauded the government for the new First Nations, Métis and Inuit education policy framework.

"It's an approach that recognizes and embeds a joint working relationship with our leaders to identify and implement the educational system changes that are needed to steadily improve the learning environment," he said, noting the changes are positive for all Canadians.

"Indigenous thought and practice can be beneficial," he said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-indigenous-students-funding-1.3391416>

## **Plans for Catholic school in Winnipeg's North End must halt, indigenous activists say**

**Establishment of Jesuit middle school works against truth and reconciliation, Morrissette and Favel say**

By Larry Morrissette and James Favel, [for CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 06, 2016 7:59 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 06, 2016 7:59 AM CT



A group of students and a nun pose in a classroom at Cross Lake Indian Residential School in Cross Lake, Man., in February 1940. The Catholic Church ran more than half of Canada's residential schools, which devastated First Nations families and culture. (REUTERS/Library and Archives Canada)

The Catholic Church ran more than half of Canada's residential schools. In these schools, they immersed indigenous children and youth in Catholic culture. The effect on these children and youth and their families has been so great that on the first page of its final report, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission has said that what the residential schools did "can best be described as cultural genocide." The TRC has called on the Pope to apologize "for the Roman Catholic Church's role in the spiritual, cultural, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis children in Catholic-run residential schools."

Now this same church wants to establish yet another Catholic school in a largely indigenous community — Winnipeg's North End. The principal and executive director of the proposed Gonzaga Middle School acknowledges that the culture of the school will be Catholic, and goes so far as to say that the school "will immerse students in Catholic culture." The principal will personally interview potential students and their families, hand-picking the 60 students he considers to be the most suitable candidates. They will then spend their middle school years being immersed in Catholic culture, and when they are finished middle school, they will be steered into one of Winnipeg's private Catholic high schools, where their tuition will be paid for.

As Winnipeg School Division board chair Mark Wasyliv has described it, Gonzaga Middle School will offer "a country-club education" for a select handful of students, but "in exchange, you're going to be part of our religion." In addition, these hand-picked students will be removed from the inner city as the consequence of being steered into private Catholic high schools. This is what the residential schools did, and it is contrary to what is needed if we are to build healthy communities in the inner city. As Wasyliv has said, in the Winnipeg School Division "we're interested in building up communities and that means building up all students in a community."



Gonzaga Middle School, which will give selected low-income Winnipeg students a private-school Catholic education, is scheduled to open in the North End in September. (CBC)

The establishment of the Jesuit middle school is inconsistent with what the Truth and Reconciliation Commission is calling for. Nowhere in its "Calls to Action" in pursuit of reconciliation does the TRC invite the Catholic Church back into Indigenous communities so that they can "immerse students in Catholic culture." On the contrary, the TRC rightly observes that it was this immersion — and the cultural arrogance that it implies — that was the problem. Instead of being immersed in Catholic culture, our young people need to learn about the beauty and wisdom inherent in our own indigenous cultures.

That is what we believe the Manitoba Collaborative Indigenous Education Blueprint for Universities, Colleges and Public School Boards, which was signed in December 2015, is calling for. It commits universities, colleges and public schools in Manitoba to advance indigenous education and reconciliation. The universities, colleges and public school boards who have signed on to this initiative have committed to "promoting research and learning that reflects the history and contemporary context of the lives of indigenous people." By promoting indigenous cultures in this way, says David Barnard, president of the University of Manitoba, the initiative will "make Manitoba a centre of excellence in indigenous education." This cannot be achieved by yet again immersing indigenous children in Catholic culture.

There is an indigenous cultural revival underway in Canada. Winnipeg, with the country's largest urban indigenous population, is at the epicentre of this exciting process. Indigenous people, and especially our youth, are saying they want to make the decisions that will shape their futures and the collective future of our people. Over the past 35 years, indigenous people have built a remarkable array of community-based organizations run by and for our people. This includes a variety of educational institutions that have proved to be exceptionally effective, including Children of the Earth High School, the Aboriginal Centre, Urban Circle Training Centre and others. The Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives' State of the Inner City Report 2015 shows that these and other similar community-based organizations have benefited from public funding and are starting to produce real gains in the inner city — in educational outcomes, employment and poverty reduction, for example. Inner city people, including indigenous people, are rebuilding their communities, and are doing so with a homegrown approach that is the product of years of hard work and real learning.

Despite all of this, the Catholic Church continues to believe that they know better than us what our children need. They stand accused of cultural genocide. The Pope will soon be asked by Canada's new prime minister to issue an apology for the terrible damage Catholic residential schools have caused to our people. Yet once again, having apparently learned nothing, the Catholic Church is working to build a middle school in the North End that will immerse our children in Catholic culture.

The Catholic Church has caused us enough damage. It is time for this to stop. All Manitobans committed to the pursuit of truth and reconciliation should join us in demanding that any and all activities of the Gonzaga Middle School be halted immediately and permanently.

*Larry Morrissette is co-author of Indians Wear Red: Colonialism, Resistance and Aboriginal Street Gangs. James Favel is a North End community activist.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/catholic-school-north-end-indigenous-1.3391374>

## How to teach Indigenous self-government

Self-government doesn't come without hitches, but Yukon College's students dream big

Martha Troian

January 7, 2016



Yukon College

Cynthia James worked as an education support worker for Carcross Tagish First Nation and Ta'an Kwach'an Council, just south of Whitehorse, from 2006 to 2012. But she recently added a new badge of honour to her accomplishments, graduating from Yukon College's [First Nations governance and public administration](#) program. "There hasn't been, in the past, education relevant to governance, because [it's] still new," says James, 34.

For almost 150 years, First Nations have been governed by the federal Indian Act of 1867. As more and more First Nations challenged old treaties and negotiated new land-claim agreements, it gave rise to more autonomy in the form of self-governance agreements.

There are now 22 self-government agreements, and, as of April, there were [90 more in negotiation](#), according to the federal Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development.

Of 14 First Nations in the Yukon, 11 are self-governed, which means they develop their own laws and have greater control over their own lands and resources. “Everything is a learning process in building of a government,” says James.

Yukon College’s certificate program takes a community approach. “We have the 14 First Nations sitting at the table and writing the courses with us, which doesn’t usually happen. Usually it’s an academic in an office creating the curriculum,” says Tosh Southwick, director of First Nation Initiatives at the college.

First Nations governments differ from their colonial counterparts, in that they are built on traditional values such as respect for the land and consensus building.

Classroom discussions often cover language and cultural preservation and revitalization, or traditional laws such as citizenship or clans, says Southwick. “You get this course that is incredibly relevant and reflective of many different points of view. The dialogue happening in the classroom is just phenomenal.”

The program also brings in elders, respected members of the First Nations community, to share their stories.

Demand has been so steady for the part-time certificate program—it only takes 15 to 18 students each year, but they come from as far away as northern B.C. and the Northwest Territories (including small towns like Inuvik, Whatì, and Fort Liard)—that the college will offer a three-year bachelor of policy studies in indigenous governance beginning in 2017, and is adding a one-year post-graduate certificate in climate change and public policy.

Shadelle Chambers, 35, an elected councillor of the Champagne-Aishihik First Nation, says what began as a pilot project between her community and Yukon College in 2008 is now a speciality very much on the radar.

“It’s important to have educated and knowledgeable leaders and decision makers within our Nations.”

For James, the highlight was sitting in class with people who shared the same passion. “It was really easy to dream about what more we could be doing.”

**Direct Link:** <http://www.macleans.ca/education/how-to-teach-indigenous-self-government/>

## Aboriginal Health

### Keeping reserves dry isn't easy: P.A. tribal council vice-chief

## Hatchet Lake First Nation is among a number of dry reserves in Saskatchewan

[CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 05, 2016 10:56 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 05, 2016 10:56 AM CT



Hatchet Lake First Nation is in northeastern Saskatchewan, about 700 kilometres northeast of Prince Albert. (Google Maps)

Prohibiting alcohol is something the Standing Buffalo First Nation is considering in the wake of a homicide on New Year's Day — but other reserves in Saskatchewan have already taken that step and say it's not easy to do.

Joseph Tsannie, vice-chief of the Prince Albert Grand Council, is a member of the Hatchet Lake First Nation in the province's northeast, which became a dry reserve years ago.

Tsannie notes it is a challenge to keep alcohol out. He's currently working with the grand council on a strategy to reduce bootlegging in the north.

To make that happen, it will take co-operation among First Nations, police and the provincial government's liquor authority.

"The challenge is still there. You know, when a person has the will they'll always find a way to bring in ... the liquor and drugs into a community," he explained.

Many underlying issues must still be addressed, but there is also a need for better facilities, he said.

"I know some of our First Nations within our communities — within the tribal council — are looking at building a treatment facility to help people with those addictions and to become healthy," he said.

The provincial government has loosened up liquor regulations in recent years and some people have raised concerns this will generally increase the availability of alcohol.

Tsannie said he doesn't want the government to make it easier to get alcohol in the north.

To that end, he invited Saskatchewan Liquor and Gaming officials into Hatchet Lake and had people share stories of how alcohol affected their lives.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/keeping-alcohol-off-reserves-a-challenge-joseph-tsannie-says-1.3390027>

## **Cree health board to stop using private Montreal boarding homes**

**Board looking for new lodging in Montreal, likely a hotel**

CBC News Posted: Jan 05, 2016 5:32 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 05, 2016 5:34 PM CT



The Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay says it's looking for new lodging for Montreal bound patients. (CBHSSJB)



Alan Gull says he felt sorry for patients who were left without food at a boarding home, bringing them a meal after he saw a Facebook post. (CBC)

After repeated complaints over the quality of services provided, the Cree Board of Health and Social Services of James Bay (CBHSSJB) says it plans to stop using private boarding homes to house patients coming for medical treatment in Montreal.

The most recent incident happened before Christmas, when patients staying at one Montreal area home were left unattended and without food or care for two nights, and turned to Facebook for help.

"There were three women (there) who were breast feeding and they had nothing to eat," said Alan Gull, who works for Native Para Judicial Services in Montreal, who saw the Facebook post and brought food to them.

"I felt sorry for them."

The CBHSSJB has launched an investigation into the matter, but also says it plans to stop using private boarding homes altogether by June in an attempt to improve the quality of services. Many Cree patients must be sent south to either Montreal, Chibougamau or Val d'Or for medical treatment, because of a lack of specialists in the communities.

"If you look just in Montreal we have 60,000 nights that we have in lodging, in boarding homes, hotels and private homes and others," said Daniel St. Amour, who is the interim Executive Director of the CBHSSJB.

"The problem when they are scattered is that to pick them up on time and ensure the clients are on time," he said.



Daniel St. Amour says the board has launched an investigation into the latest incident, but that the CBHSSJB plans to stop using boarding homes entirely by June. (CBHSSJB)

It is also hard to monitor the quality.

The CBHSSJB currently uses about 6 private boarding homes in Montreal, but plans to put out a call for tender in January looking for a block of rooms under one roof, likely in a hotel.

St. Amour says having all the Cree patients under one roof, and on one floor, will make it much easier to co-ordinate transportation and control quality of lodging and food.

"We can ensure the hygiene is top notch, we will provide security on that floor and we will make sure in that facility that nutrition is up to the best standard that you can have in a health care facility," said St. Amour.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/james-bay-cree-health-montreal-lodging-1.3390888>

# Winnipeg restaurant offers healthy, indigenous cuisine



Jill Macyshon reports on a new restaurant in Winnipeg that is serving up traditional indigenous food with people from all walks of life.

CTVNews.ca Staff

Published Tuesday, January 5, 2016 9:54PM EST

Last Updated Wednesday, January 6, 2016 3:54AM EST

A Cree woman is hoping to take advantage of the movement toward eating healthier food sourced closer to home with a new restaurant serving indigenous cuisine.

Christa Bruneau-Guenther recently opened [Feast Cafe Bistro](#) in Winnipeg's West End neighbourhood.

The entrepreneur said she first realized the value of quality food while working as a day-care provider.



Landon Gossfeld prepares traditional indigenous meals at Neechi Commons in Winnipeg.



Christa Bruneau-Guenther discusses why she opened the indigenous restaurant *Feast*, in Winnipeg, in January 2016.

“A lot of the children couldn’t focus, couldn’t learn,” she said. After increasing the kids’ physical activity and feeding them a healthy indigenous-inspired diet, she said she saw “a complete turnaround.”

Bruneau-Guenther pointed out that ingredients like bison, fish, wild rice and Saskatoon berries are not only healthy, they don’t have to travel far to get to her restaurant, making them perfect for locavores.

“That’s the beauty of First Nations foods,” she said. “They are actually grown here on our lands.”

Bruneau-Guenther said she hopes to eventually open her restaurant to students, who can spread the word about indigenous cuisine even further.

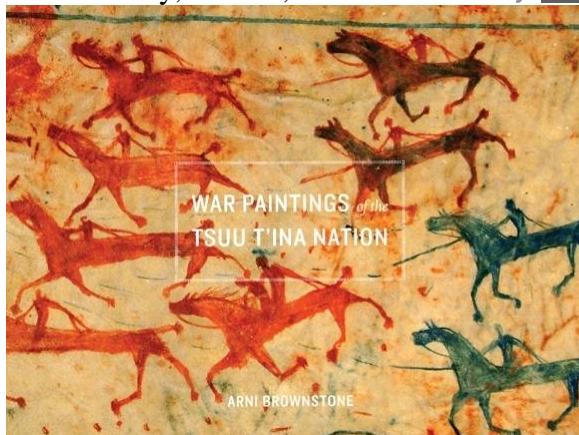
*With a report from CTV National Manitoba Bureau Chief Jill Macychon*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/winnipeg-restaurant-offers-healthy-indigenous-cuisine-1.2725260>

## Aboriginal History

### Paintings share war exploits

Thursday, Dec 31, 2015 06:00 am By: [Rob Alexander](#)



During the winter of 1860, as Tsuu T'ina hunters and their families killed and butchered a small herd of bison they had trapped in a log pound near the Battle River and Dried Meat Lake, a group of Cree warriors surrounded and attacked them.

Some of the Tsuu T'ina, including their head chief, Bull Head, ran for their nearby camp where they fought off the Cree. During the fight, Bull Head rushed into his tipi for his rifle, killing a Cree attacker with a well-aimed shot through the tipi entrance.

Years later, Tsuu T'ina artists sat down and recorded the exploits of Tsuu T'ina warriors, including those of Bull Head, on tipi covers and liners, robes and shirts.

Today these paintings, known as war exploit paintings, offer a window into the past of the people of the Tsuu T'ina First Nation (also known as Sarcee or Sarsi) and of the history of the Great Plains, specifically warfare and how it was recorded and shared.

“(These paintings) enrich our understanding of the Tsuu T’inas (and provide) insight into an important form of visual communication once practiced by more than 30 Indian tribes across the Great Plains of North America,” writes Arni Brownstone in his recent book *War Paintings of the Tsuu T’ina Nation*.

“Their primary purpose was to keep a man’s proficiency as a warrior in public view, and accordingly they were executed on visible surfaces: robes, shirts, tipi covers and tipi liners.”

Brownstone, assistant curator of Plains Indian Culture at the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto, discusses in his book five paintings produced between 1875 and 1920, interpreting the stories and the history that the pictographic imagery tells on these Tsuu T’ina robes and tipi liners. The paintings are today held in collections at the Royal Ontario Museum, American Museum of Natural History, Tsuu T’ina Museum and Cultural Centre, Burke Museum of Natural History and the American Museum of Natural History.

The five paintings – three tipi liners and a robe – are episodic, sharing a number of exploits at once rather than just one story or exploit. The paintings also tend to cross over from one to another, sharing some of the same stories and events, such as Bull Head killing the Cree warrior. This story can be seen in each of these five key paintings that form the backbone of Brownstone’s book.

Along with sharing many of the same stories, these paintings also share the same artists, and two men in particular created the majority of the pictographic images. Brownstone identified that a man known as Two Guns, who was described by the Tsuu T’ina as the tribe’s painter and recorder, made 68 per cent of the images on the five paintings.

“(Two Guns) work vividly evoked the high drama, danger, and exhilaration of warfare while accurately recording detail,” writes Brownstone. “It was his broad repertoire of expressive figure poses and tendency toward full pictorial description, as distinct from the ‘frozen’ figures and shorthand narrative style of earlier pictographic traditions that distinguished Two Guns from his contemporaries.”

Another Tsuu T’ina artist, Fire Long Ago, painted five per cent of the paintings.

Brownstone was unable to identify the men who painted the remaining 22 per cent of the five paintings.

Brownstone shares both the full robe or tipi liner, providing the visual context, and the individual exploits set apart from each other with its interpretation and how it fits with the greater context of Tsuu T’ina and Plains history. This approach helps readers see beyond the artwork and into the lives of the people represented in the painted figures.

“While they greatly enrich our understanding of the Tsuu T’ina, these paintings provide insight on an important form of visual communication once practiced by the more than 30 Indian tribes across the Great Plains of North America. This study illustrates how the dynamics of the larger plains interethnic configuration played an important role in shaping the art of the Tsuu T’inas and, by extension, all the tribes in the region.”

But the pictographic imagery is only one part of the story; the rest is rooted in the oral tradition.

“Plains Indian pictography was also inextricably bound to oral tradition, since the spoken word was the primary means of disseminating a man’s war stories,” writes Brownstone. “The direct conversion of pictographic war records into spoken words can only be partial, since prior knowledge of the depicted events is required for their full enunciation.” Even though the focus of the book is on the Tsuu T’ina war exploit paintings, Brownstone provides a significant amount of background by addressing the history of the Plains peoples, and in general war exploit painting, and intertribal warfare on the Great Plains. These background chapters are short yet extremely helpful in understanding a complex history.

War Paintings of the Tsuu T’ina Nation is one of those books that anyone interested in the history of the Indigenous people of the Great Plains hopes comes along, perhaps without even knowing it. These paintings and their imagery are not an unknown or obscure art form, but at the same time it requires specialized and often intimate knowledge to understand.

Brownstone has done an admirable job providing just enough information and research to allow readers to understand the context of war exploit paintings, the history of the Tsuu T’ina on the Great Plains and the interpretation of this complex, beautiful and dynamic form of storytelling.

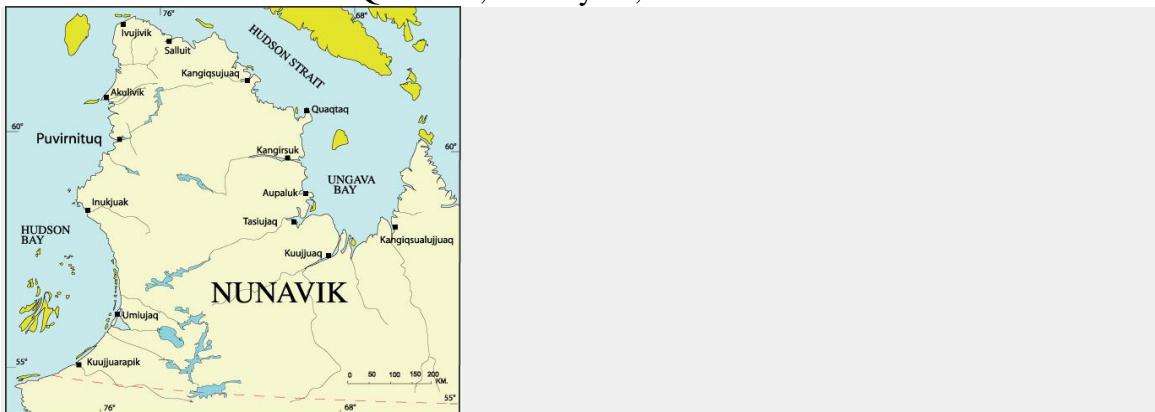
War Paintings of the Tsuu T’ina Nation by Arni Brownstone is published by The University of Alberta Press. It is available for \$35.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.rmoutlook.com/article/Paintings-share-war-exploits-20151231>

## Nunavik the colony

**“Small and heroic, because big and heroic is not our aspiration”**

SPECIAL TO NUNATSIAQ NEWS, January 06, 2016 - 11:30 am



“A colony is a territory under the political control of a geographically distant state. Nunavik is a territorial colony of both Canada and Quebec.”

## JOBIE WEETALUKTUK

Big talk day. Just big talk. Uqaraviuk pijariipait. You are done with it as soon as it has passed your lips.

A colony is a territory under the political control of a geographically distant state. Nunavik is a territorial colony of both Canada and Quebec.

Both govern from distant states, both geographically different, and in living realities. In geopolitical terms, we belong to and are in Canada.

In the same sense, we belong to and are part of Quebec. In some sense, we have accepted this as reality and seek no other option.

In 1950, Inuit were given the right to vote in Canada. In 1975, we made our first accord with Canada and Quebec by negotiating and accepting the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement.

It was by no means a fair process and it was very difficult for the Inuit party.

To cede, surrender, and extinguish aboriginal rights to territory was improper, unacceptable, and bitter. Yet, feeling like we had no choice, we accepted it with pain.

Today, Nunavik's working language is English. Quebec's official language is French and French only.

Canada's official languages are English and French. Nunavik has no official language, but it is under the jurisdiction of Quebec, but with a small exemption clause.

Years ago, I heard this. "Isaki cried today at the meeting."

Isaki Padlayat was an elder from Salluit and a board member of Avataq Cultural Institute. He was highly respected, loved person. He was also proud and a passionate man. He was unabashedly Inuit or Inuk in all his ways.

He had just learned at that meeting that Avataq had hired a white man as their language coordinator. It was an embarrassment and humiliation to him personally.

He felt ACI should have shown better judgment. He was board member for ACI and accountable to the Inuit of Nunavik. He had one way of doing things, which was with his whole heart.

We exit 2015 in the same political and linguistic condition as in the days of Isaki. I hear silence coming on regarding this matter for 2016.

Isaki could not move us. Nunavik will still work in English. It will remain that way until French has become strong enough to become the new working language. Inuktitut will just listen on and fade as our elders die.

Inuktitut has made remarkable gains in the last few decades. It has added thousands of words to itself. And so many words have become obsolete and lost also.

Some of our new vernacular is just embarrassing. Words like “Funnialuk” — as in “very funny.”

As if Inuit, of all people, had no other way to say, “that is so funny” in the past. As if we were never funny before and had no way to express it. As if we had to be colonized to become hilarious people. Our ancestors could laugh stuff off that would make us cry today.

Today, there are small and heroic efforts to advance Inuktitut in Nunavik, but we accept that English is the working language.

Small and heroic, because big and heroic is not our aspiration, Nunavik is a colony as we look on and listen.

*Jobie Weetaluktuk is a filmmaker who lives in Montreal.*

**Direct Link:** [http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavik\\_the\\_colony/](http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674nunavik_the_colony/)

## **Aboriginal Identity & Representation**

### **MLA Trevor Horne finds his Métis heritage**

Wednesday, Jan 06, 2016 06:00 am, By: Michelle Ferguson



It started off as a simple enough question, but like the stem of a Voyageur’s canoe slicing through the stillness of a lake, it sent waves through the Horne family – with some of the ripples only being felt now.

While attending a family reunion, Laura Horne was asked whether she had applied for her Métis card yet. She had no clue what her mom’s cousin was talking about. But given that Douglas Munro, the relative in question, had just finished compiling and publishing a series of letters written by an ancestor who married into a Métis family, she decided to look into it.

That was seven years ago. Now Laura works as a genealogist for the Métis Nation of Alberta and her son Trevor sits as MLA for the riding of Spruce Grove-St. Albert, advocating for better relations between the province and indigenous peoples.

“I wanted to know more. I wanted to know what being Métis was; what the family history was. I wanted to know the stories. I wanted to know these people,” she says recalling her initial foray into the study of family lineage.

Fortunately for Laura, the family history was well documented. She was able to track down preserved records through the Hudson’s Bay Company, which employed many of the patriarchs on great-great-great-grandmother Harriet McKay’s (the Métis link) side, as well as Harriet’s eventual husband William Edward Traill; Métis scrip records, which entitled those of Métis descent to a certain allotment of public lands; and, of course, the letters lovingly kept by Catherine Parr Strickland Traill, that were published by her first cousin once-removed under the title Fur Trade Letters of Willie Trail, 1864-1893.

Reading her son William’s letters, Catherine, who was an English writer living in Ontario, decided that they might be of value to someone someday.

For others it’s not so easy.

“Most of the Métis families won’t have the wealth of written information that we are lucky enough to have,” she says.

Every will, birth certificate, and marriage document she can get her hands on helps fill the gaps. It’s not uncommon to walk into the family home and discover a neat stack of papers strewn across the dining room table, says Trevor.

“Doing genealogy like this is not just for me identifying that my great-grandmother is Ethel Traill. I want to know who Ethel Traill is,” he said.

HBC records show William Edward Traill being stationed at Lac La Biche in 1874.

Coupled with the letters sent home to his mother it is possible to retrace a terrible period in Harriet McKay’s life. She loses a baby to whooping cough on the trail to the remote Alberta town and slips into a deep depression.

William’s mother-in-law tells him to get Harriet pregnant again as soon as possible, to help give new meaning to her life. That is around the time that Ethel Traill, Laura’s great-great-grandmother, was conceived.

“I knew our family history, or some of it, pertaining to the Métis when I started, but so many things are still an unknown to me. It’s a learning experience every day,” Laura says.

When his mom first shared the news about the family’s Metis links, Trevor, in good teenage fashion, more or less shrugged it off.

He attended events in Lac La Biche with his parents, taking in this new culture that was part of his blood and heritage, but not so much his daily life. Or so he thought – it turns out many practices such as berry picking were unknowingly passed down through the generations.

“A lot of it was trying to learn for myself what the culture is,” he says. “I don’t think I was really aware that Métis fiddling was a distinct style.”

He has since discovered that they sell CDs of the genre at Edmonton Folk Fest. The style is easily recognizable, marked by the percussive use of the bow, complex harmonic structures, hand clapping and foot-stomping.

More importantly, through his many conversations with chiefs, elders and community members, he has discovered that, like any other distinct group, the Métis and other

indigenous populations in Alberta have specific concerns, such as health care, especially in the northern part of the province where it can be difficult to access.

His background has opened a door that many politicians have unsuccessfully tried to locate. He has been invited to several events, either to speak or as a guest of honour.

“Being invited to all (these events), it’s a lot easier to see and hear about all these issues and to keep them in mind,” says Trevor.

He has strong hopes that the government under Rachel Notley will fulfill its promise to create more meaningful relationships with First Nations and Métis peoples.

Horne is now a proud member of the Métis Nation of Alberta. But it wasn’t until recently that he received his sash.

Worn today as a symbol of Métis heritage, the brightly coloured, finger-woven belt traditionally had many uses. Wrapped around the midsection the sash carried tools of fur trade and held a coat closed, but was also used as a wash cloth, a towel, a saddle blanket, a rope to lash a canoe (it could measure up to 12-feet long), as well as a tourniquet or sling for injuries, and the threads of the fringed edges could be used as an emergency sewing kit.

Laura enjoyed the research so much that she changed career paths and started working for the Métis Nation of Alberta’s Genealogy Research Centre in Edmonton.

“One day I’m going to go to Winnipeg with or without (my husband), Stacey or Trevor and I’m going to spend as much time as I can, locked in the archives,” she says with an air of excitement.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.stalbertgazette.com/article/Links-to-the-past-20150106>

## Aboriginal Politics

### **Doug Cuthand: Changes overdue in aboriginal policy**

DOUG CUTHAND, SASKATOON STARPHOENIX

Published on: January 2, 2016 | Last Updated: January 2, 2016 5:30 AM CST



Cindy Blackstock is executive director of the First Nations Child and Caring Society.

I’m looking forward to 2016. We got a small taste in the fall of the changes to come, and this year we will see the full meal deal.

While the prevailing national mood during the federal election was for change, no other group voted for change more than aboriginal voters. Now the stars have lined up, and we have a receptive federal government combined with a pent up desire for change in Indian Country.

Two broad areas need to be addressed: First, the funding formulas must be brought up to date so there is parity in money for education, social programs and other areas. Second, there must be a serious process established to review and update First Nations legislation.

When the Chretien government back in 1996 was cutting spending and balancing the books, it placed a two per cent spending increase cap on First Nations programs. This was supposed to be a temporary measure to be ended when the fiscal situation improved.

In November 2005 federal representatives along with provincial and aboriginal leaders met and drafted the Kelowna Accord. This funding agreement was supposed to address the shortfall created by the cap. Even though the accord was signed, the Harper government that replaced Paul Martin's Liberals trashed the deal and continued with the funding cap.

A temporary measure became permanent, and First Nations infrastructure, education and social programming fell behind, hurt by inflation and a First Nations' population growth rate that, in many cases, was double the two-per-cent cap.

Today we have a serious shortfall in capital projects and program funds. Justin Trudeau's Liberal government has committed to removing the funding cap, but how much more they are willing to commit is uncertain. However, there must be parity in funding for salaries for on-reserve teachers, for social programs and other functions in order to provide services comparable to those provided by the provinces.

As well, the Kelowna Accord must be revisited and a package developed to address the shortfall created by two decades of the funding cap.

The push for parity will come from the decision soon to be handed down by the Canadian Human Rights Commission in relation to a case presented by the First Nations Child and Family Caring Society. The organization has maintained that the funding shortfall in First Nations programs is discriminatory, and must be on par with other jurisdictions.

The commission has already determined that the organization's CEO Cindy Blackstock was harassed and spied on by the Indigenous Affairs ministry, so we are expecting a favourable decision. The government will find it next to impossible to ignore the commission's ruling.

The next challenge is to update legislation to recognize Section 35 in the Constitution, which recognizes and affirms aboriginal and treaty rights. The existing Indian Act is a piece of colonial legislation that exists for Ottawa to administer the Indians. There's a lot of cheap talk about scrapping the Indian Act, but this seemingly easy solution is eclipsed by the problem of what will replace it?

The Harper government's First Nations Education Act failed because it was developed in isolation, and basically was colonial and paternalistic. The days of creating First Nations education rules in isolation are done. If we are to have a nation-to-nation relationship with Canada, then we need to develop legislation jointly so it is presented to the House of Commons and the Senate intact and supported.

For example, the Indian Act will have to be torn apart and each section treated as a separate act. Education, social development, lands and resources, health, economic rights and so on all will have to be addressed on their own. The new acts will have to be enabling legislation, so that each First Nation can pass its own corresponding acts and allow for local cultural and political practices.

This isn't a one-year program but a process that continues through the full term of this government. We can't go back, and it will be a challenge for the whole country.

**Direct Link:** <http://thestarphoenix.com/opinion/columnists/0104-edit-cuthand-col>

## **Aboriginal Canadians will be 'high priority' in budget: Morneau**

Finance Minister has launched pre-budget consultations in advance of the Liberal government's first fiscal plan

The Canadian Press

January 6, 2016



Canada's Finance Minister Bill Morneau. (Chris Wattie, Reuter, file)

OTTAWA — The federal finance minister says the Liberal government's vows to help Canada's Aboriginal Peoples will be a top priority in the upcoming budget.

Bill Morneau says the new government considers its recent commitments to helping aboriginal communities to be critically important.

Morneau was asked about the issue today while fielding questions as he participated in an online forum with universities across the country.

He says Canadians gave the Liberals a mandate to follow through on their campaign commitments — although he acknowledges that Canada's economic situation is worse than expected.

The Liberals made several key promises to indigenous Canadians that were not costed in the party's platform — such as delivering on all 94 recommendations from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's probe of residential schools.

Morneau has launched pre-budget consultations in advance of the Liberal government's first fiscal plan, to be introduced in the coming months.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.macleans.ca/politics/ottawa/liberal-vows-to-aboriginal-canadians-will-be-high-priority-in-budget-morneau/>

## **McMurray Metis hire new general manager**

By Vincent McDermott

Wednesday, January 6, 2016 5:26:40 MST PM



Daniel Stuckless is presented with a copy of The Mark of the Metis by McMurray Metis president Gail Gallup in this supplied January 2016 image

The McMurray Metis has hired Daniel Stuckless, the current president of the Cumulative Environmental Management Association, to replace outgoing general manager Kyle Harrietha.

Stuckless has worked with the Fort McKay First Nation as their environment and regulatory affairs manager since 2011 and has lived in Fort McMurray since 2003. Last year, he took control of CEMA after the board revoked the contract of longtime executive director Glen Semenchuk.

"This was an opportunity that was a good fit for me," said Stuckless. "A lot of folks in fort McKay have wished me well and were happy for me. Fort McKay has been great to

me over the years and I still plan on being involved in the community while I have this new job.”

Stuckless’ former job with the Fort McKay First Nation focused on the environmental and regulatory components regarding compensation, consultation and negotiation with industry and government. The new position is more senior and involves overseeing all of the functions of the McMurray Metis local, including government and community relations.

“I’m very familiar with the region and the companies north of Fort McMurray. The learning curve for me will involve getting to know the number of companies south of Fort McMurray on a formal basis,” he said.

A top priority for the local will be lobbying for a provincial Metis consultation policy. The local is currently involved in a dispute with Canadian Natural Resources, which wants to begin exploratory work in areas the Metis say are culturally significant.

“The members will want to know what is going on while we continue to develop the oilsands,” he said. “It’s only a matter of time before this government is caught up to speed. I’m hoping, with the new NDP government, that it’s something we see before the next election.”

In a statement, McMurray Metis president Gail Gallup and vice president Bill Loutitt praised Stuckless’ background.

“Daniel has the full confidence of the elected McMurray Métis Local Council as we work with our members, our community, industry, and governments on the many issues McMurray Métis is working to address,” said Loutitt.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/2016/01/06/mcmurray-metis-hire-new-general-manager>

## **Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources**

### **Aboriginal leaders warn climate change is impacting northern road networks**

First Nations is urging the government to invest in proper winter road networks so northern aboriginal communities maintain easy access to food, fuel.



Isadore Day, Ontario regional chief for the Assembly of First Nations, pictured here in September, says "the winter roads have essentially become a way of life for the communities and now they can't rely on those winter roads" because of climate change.

**By:** Kristy Kirkup The Canadian Press, Published on Sun Jan 03 2016

OTTAWA—Wonky weather conditions are prompting aboriginal leaders to raise concerns about the impact of climate change on winter roads, which serve as lifelines for food, fuel and other necessities in several northern communities.

Isadore Day, the Ontario regional chief for the Assembly of First Nations, said the reliability of the northern winter road network is in jeopardy in his province.

"The winter roads have essentially become a way of life for the communities and now they can't rely on those winter roads," Day said, noting the network is used to offset the cost to bring essential goods to fly-in reserves by air.

The problem exemplifies why there was outcry from First Nations during the recent COP21 climate change summit in Paris, Day said.

"This is the type of issue where the rubber hits the road," he said.

"There will be no road if we don't have an opportunity to speak for ourselves on the issue of climate change and this certainly is a direct impact."

If people want access into the north, the only viable way now is to have a proper road network, Day added.

NDP indigenous affairs critic Charlie Angus, who represents a northern Ontario riding that includes a number of First Nations communities, said money needs to be invested in sustainable infrastructure.

There has been a long-standing push for permanent roads but climate change has made the issue much more pressing, he noted.

"My message to the government is 'you're going to have to put your money where your mouth is when you make these promises,'" Angus said.

“This is the front line and this is where the action needs to be taking place now.”

There is “every evidence” Canada’s Aboriginal Peoples are indeed on the front lines of climate change, Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett said in an interview with The Canadian Press.

“I think it is very worrying and I think that as we look not only to Ontario but to Manitoba, the proposals for the eastern road there, it is something that we are looking at and knowing that we’ve got to build the kind of resilient infrastructure that will deal with the changing climate.”

The federal Liberal government is open to examining the impacts of the issue to allow for a long-term strategy to be developed, Bennett added.

“This will require a real collaborative effort,” she said, highlighting that permanent infrastructure would help to create resource revenue in the future.

“We need to have everybody included in really assessing the need and then developing feasibility projects and proposals.”

Day said First Nations leaders from Ontario plan to press the minister to bring this “essential issue” to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s cabinet table.

Solutions will also have to include all levels of government, he said.

“For what it is worth, you’re going to have every government at the table to ensure these road systems are done properly and that they’re done in a timely fashion,” Day said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/01/03/aboriginal-leaders-warn-climate-change-is-impacting-northern-road-networks.html>

## **Experts say environment, community balance needed to protect Nunavut coast**

**‘It can’t just be lines on a map, they need to be quality protections,’ WWF-Canada**

By Sima Sahar Zerehi, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 05, 2016 4:30 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 05, 2016 4:30 AM CT



'It's fantastic that the current government, not only ran on a platform, but then adopted a platform of protecting the marine environment,' said Paul Crowley, the director of WWF-Canada's Arctic Program. (Sima Sahar Zerehi/CBC)

Justin Trudeau's Liberal government has promised to designate 10 per cent of Canada's oceans as marine protected areas, but in Nunavut, which sits on the Arctic Ocean, that means balancing environmental concerns with the needs of Inuit communities. Currently, only 1.3 per cent of Canada's oceans are protected, but the Liberal government has promised that by next year, that number will grow to 5 per cent, and by 2020 it will be at 10 per cent.

"It's fantastic that the current government not only ran on a platform, but then adopted a platform of protecting the marine environment," said Paul Crowley, the director of WWF-Canada's Arctic Program. "The marine environment is really crucial in terms of our resilience to climate change, particularly in the Arctic."

Crowley said Canada needs to be looking at these ecosystems and making sure that they are protected for the future, particularly in light of climate change.

"Fish stocks are going to move, ice edges are going to move," he said. "I think we need to be looking at the resilience of the ecosystem in the face of that."

In 2014, a report from the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society found that Canada ranked last among 10 countries with the longest coastlines when it comes to how much marine area is protected from development.

"The protection of the marine environment is something that Canada has been a horrible laggard on," said Crowley, who said that environmental groups have been waiting for action on marine protected areas in Nunavut for a long time.

"People have been waiting for the protection of Lancaster Sound through the National Marine Conservation Area for over 30 years, since the 70s, when there was the oil and gas exploration,"

## **Not just lines on a map**

Crowley added that simply designating an area as protected is not enough.

"They need to be quality protections," he said, "Canadians expect that in a protected area you won't see oil and gas development. I think that we need to ensure that all our marine protection has at the very least that."

In Lancaster Sound, oil and gas development could be possible in the future, Crowley said, with some decade-old leases that are still listed as active by Shell.

Crowley also pointed to commercial fishing as another issue that needs to be negotiated in protected areas.

"There needs to be a minimum of 30 per cent of an area that is a no-go zone," he said. "A zone where stocks can recover."

## **Input from Inuit needed, says fisheries minister**



'The prime minister made it very clear in the campaign that meaningful consultation and duty to consult will be done and taken seriously and input from Inuit from here in Nunavut will happen,' said Hunter Tootoo, Nunavut's Member of Parliament and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans. (Sima Sahar Zerehi)

Traditionally, Inuit communities are marine communities. Many Nunavut residents live on the coast and still hunt marine mammals. While the territory's land claims agreement has dealt with a lot of land management issues, much less work has been done on the marine environment.

"The prime minister made it very clear in the campaign that meaningful consultation and duty to consult will be done and taken seriously and input from Inuit from here in Nunavut will happen," said Hunter Tootoo, Nunavut's Member of Parliament and the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans.

The Arctic Council, an intergovernmental forum for Arctic governments that includes Canada, has examined how marine protected areas across various countries relate to each

other. Their goal is to create a network of protected areas to help protect marine life. As part of that work, they are consulting Inuit communities.

"This is in their backyard, so we can never lose sight of that," said Rene Sauvé, the chair of the marine working group of the Arctic Council. "This is most relevant for all those coastal communities.

"Of course they want to make sure there's no access issues for them, in terms of their traditional activities and of course their future aspirations, too."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/protecting-nunavuts-oceans-1.3389248>

## **Saskatchewan NDP leadership candidate Ryan Meili lights resource-sharing powderkeg**

MURRAY MANDRYK, REGINA LEADER-POST

Published on: January 5, 2016 | Last Updated: January 5, 2016 6:54 AM CST



Former NDP leadership candidate Ryan Meili pictured on Wednesday, February 19, 2013.

Perhaps twice-unsuccessful NDP leadership candidate Ryan Meili truly didn't mean to create a firestorm inside his party's ranks.

After all, Meili's biggest weakness in his 2009 and 2013 Saskatchewan NDP leadership bids was his penchant for not thinking in political ways ... or at least, for being uncompromising on arguably more left-leaning policies.

"I try to blend principles and politics," Meili said in an interview Monday. "Sometimes, principles win."

Whatever the case, there's no doubt that Meili lit a political powderkeg in NDP ranks when he tweeted on Dec. 29: "Very sad to see (NDP leader) @cambroten change his posn, ignore @Sask\_NDP policy on FN rev sharing."

At issue was a comment, in a year-end story by CBC's Stefani Langenegger. In it, NDP leader Cam Broten (who beat Meili for the party leadership by a mere 44 votes three years ago) said the NDP would not again campaign on sharing resource revenues with First Nations — as it did in 2011.

"Doesn't work for me. Did not work for the province. In speaking with many First Nations leaders, as I have over the past year, did not work for them. And so, that proposal is not on," Broten said, notwithstanding that revenue-sharing has been relentlessly pushed by the Assembly of First Nations (AFN) Grand Chief Perry Bellegarde.

Instead, Broten advocated the province filling the financial gap between on-reserve education funding (a federal government responsibility) and off-reserve education funding, and then billing Ottawa for the difference.

But Broten clearly opposes any holus-bolus sharing of revenue wealth with First Nations — a policy offered in the 2011 election campaign by former NDP leader Dwain Lingenfelter, one that sent the NDP tumbling to record lows in popular vote and seats in Saskatchewan.

In fairness, Meili explained: "I wasn't looking forward to an opportunity to make (political) trouble for anyone, but I did feel it was a pretty big (policy) departure" And while his tweet was rather pointed and was accompanied by hashtags for various Twitter discussion sites, it should be noted the Saskatoon doctor doesn't post many political comments on his Twitter feed. They're mostly about his "Upstream" efforts to address poverty. Nor has he been all that active in politics since his last leadership run.

That said, it would be equally fair to say his tweet wasn't much appreciated by the NDP caucus, which has very little interest in Meili's input at the best of times — a tendency to what Meili describes as "keeping me distant" from Broten and NDP policy development. "It's because of (positions) like this that this is more likely to happen," Meili said.

And as politically difficult as it might be it, revenue-sharing with First Nations "might be something that is coming anyway" through the courts, Meili argued.

It was a year ago that University of Saskatchewan's research chair for regional innovation, Ken Coates, authored a research paper for the Ottawa-based Macdonald-Laurier Institute entitled "Sharing the Wealth" that stressed First Nations will continue to have both a right and role in future Canadian resource development. The U of S professor stressed that a series of court rulings have shifted this decades-old notion from one of ridicule to one of treaty rights.

Rather than engaging in a drawn-out court case the province is to likely lose, Meili argued it's better now to demonstrate revenue-sharing is "something we want to do, as opposed to something we don't want to do."

And based on the response to his tweet, Meili said he believes this is a view many in the party share. They recognize past historical approaches of being “completely paternalistic” or providing “no-strings-attached cheques” have not worked.

At the very least, it should be something the NDP is willing to talk about, Meili contended.

As Broten and the NDP seemed to have recognized, even talking about it is a political non-starter for most Saskatchewan voters.

But because of Meili’s tweet, the NDP is again talking about it — with a provincial vote just three months away.

*Mandryk is the political columnist for the Regina Leader-Post.*

**Direct Link:** <http://leaderpost.com/opinion/columnists/meili-lights-resource-sharing-powderkeg>

## **Shell's Kitimat LNG proposal is first to get key permit**

**Joint venture is made up of Shell Canada, affiliates of PetroChina, Korea Gas and Mitsubishi**

By Laura Kane, The Canadian Press Posted: Jan 06, 2016 7:52 AM PT Last Updated: Jan 06, 2016 7:52 AM PT



This rendering of the proposed project shows two of the LNG trains. (LNG Canada/flickr)

A joint venture company led by Shell has obtained the first permit to build a liquefied natural gas export facility in northern British Columbia, but the company has yet to make a final commitment to go ahead with the project.

LNG Canada is the first in the province to receive a facility permit from the B.C. Oil and Gas Commission. The document outlines the requirements for design, construction and operation of the proposed facility in Kitimat, B.C.

Director of external affairs Susannah Pierce said it's a crucial development for the project, following environmental approval from federal and provincial authorities last June.

"Really, what [the permit] looks at is: how are we designing the facility? How are we ensuring that it can operate safely in the community? How have we engaged with the community?" she said Tuesday.

Pierce said the company had reviewed and was comfortable with all 30 conditions imposed by the permit, including those on noise management and response plans.

The project could cost up to US\$40 billion and would initially consist of two processing units called trains, each able to produce 6.5 million tonnes of LNG annually. The facility could be expanded to four trains in the future.

## **Final decision still pending**

The joint venture company, which is made up of Shell Canada Energy and affiliates of PetroChina, Korea Gas Corp. and Mitsubishi Corp, has not yet made a final investment decision.

Pierce said the company, **LNG Canada**, still has to obtain one permit from Fisheries and Oceans Canada.

The joint venture participants also want assurances that the LNG project has First Nations support, is being built cost effectively and that it's the right time for such a facility, she said.

She said the company has recognized the importance of partnering with the local Haisla Nation from the beginning and the two sides have a strong, open working relationship.

Despite a global slump in energy markets dimming the outlook for LNG in B.C., Pierce said she remains upbeat about the project's future.

"I'm very enthusiastic as well as absolutely committed to the fact that we need to have a facility like this to export our gas," she said.

"I have to remain confident that we have the chance to make this real. Otherwise, we wouldn't pursue it as ambitiously as we are."

## **One of 20 projects proposed**

The project is one of 20 LNG proposals in B.C. Four have received environmental approval from the province, while two have been granted permission to proceed by the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency.

Federal decisions have yet to be made on the Pacific NorthWest LNG terminal proposed near Prince Rupert and the Woodfibre LNG project near Squamish.

The B.C. Liberal government has staked its political future on the LNG industry, with promises of 100,000 new jobs and \$100 billion in revenue over 30 years.

Minister of Natural Gas Development Rich Coleman said in late December that the industry made "remarkable" progress in 2015 and was poised to take even greater steps forward in 2016.

"If you were to listen to the critics — the 'scrooges' of economic development — they would tell you that progress has stalled and government should relinquish the B.C. Jobs Plan's ambitious goals for growth and market diversification," he said in a statement.

"Those pessimists, to be frank, are short-sighted; reluctant to admit LNG is making progress, creating jobs and securing long-term prosperity for all of us."

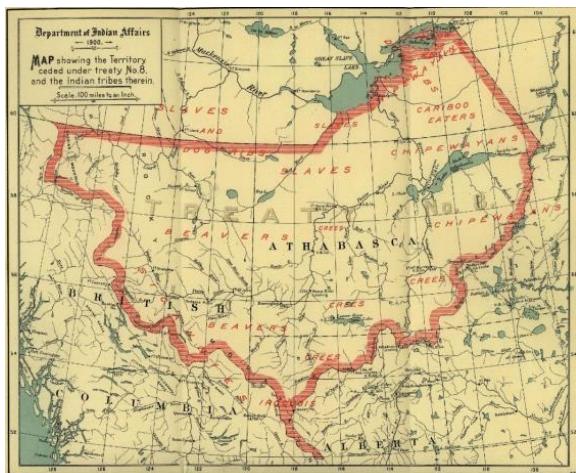
**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/shell-s-kitimat-lng-proposal-is-first-to-get-key-permit-1.3391472>

## Land Claims & Treaty Rights

### Treaty 8 nations wrestle with province over western boundary

WILLIAM STODALKA / ALASKA HIGHWAY NEWS

JANUARY 1, 2016 08:15 AM



A federal government map showing the boundaries of Treaty 8. Photo By Government of Canada

The year 1897 was not exactly a peaceful time between First Nations and European settlers.

Around that time, the Commissioner of the North West Mounted Police instructed Inspector J.D. Moodie to collect information on a route from Edmonton to the headwaters of the Pelly River for parties of miners heading to the Klondike gold fields.

After a long expedition, Moodie came back with bad news. There were reports of theft, confrontations, and threats between First Nations and prospectors at Fort St. John.

“(A post manager) informs me that the Indians here at first refused to allow the white men to come through their country without paying a toll,” he wrote. “There is no doubt that the influx of whites will materially increase the difficulties of hunting by the Indians.”

Two years later, in 1899, the Canadian government and area First Nations signed Treaty 8, which covers much of Northeast B.C., including Fort St. John and Dawson Creek, along with portions of northwest Alberta and the Northwest Territories. and was meant to avert conflict.

Even though it was a peace treaty, a dispute continues 116 years later over its most basic principles.

Several Northeast B.C. First Nations and the province are in court fighting a decade-long legal battle that could re-draw the map of Treaty 8 boundaries as they are currently accepted by the federal government.

The ancestors of the people who now make up West Moberly, Halfway River, Doig River, Prophet River, and Saulteau First Nations signed Treaty 8.

Though it was first signed in 1899, only 32 years after Canada became a country, where Treaty 8 ends on its western side is in dispute.

In 2005, those six First Nations sought a declaration that the western boundary was along the Arctic-Pacific watershed. On its northwestern point, this is near Highway 37, and near its southwestern edge, it's located near Takla Lake.

The federal government also agrees that this is the boundary, and its maps of the treaty reflects that.

“Honouring Canada’s lawful obligations to Indigenous people and working collaboratively to renew the relationship based on recognition, rights, respect, co-operation and partnership is key to achieving reconciliation with Indigenous people in

Canada," wrote federal Indigenous and Northern Affairs spokeswoman Michelle Perron in an email to the Alaska Highway News.

"Canada believes that the best way to address outstanding issues and achieve reconciliation with Indigenous Groups is through collaboration and dialogue. Negotiated agreements and outcomes are preferred wherever possible."

In their court submissions, the First Nations cite a map drawn up by the Treaty Commissioner in 1900 and a map proposed to the B.C. government of the time, as defining the western boundary, among other evidence.

The B.C. government doesn't recognize the boundary and believes the interpretation is incorrect.

In its submissions, the province argues the boundary should be along the central range of the Rocky Mountains, west of Hudson's Hope. According to Treaty 8's website, this would cut Treaty 8 territory by more than 100,000 square kilometres.

The province has cited sections of text within Treaty 8 and a 1913 map as part of their arguments in the dispute.

When reached for comment, the province declined, saying it was not appropriate to comment as the matter is still before the courts.

The dispute affects First Nations members in ways that are not just cartographical. Where the treaty boundary ends determines their Treaty and Aboriginal rights to hunt and fish. Treaty rights do not extend outside of these boundaries, so, for example, these rights wouldn't extend if members went hunting and fishing in Saskatchewan.

To call this case complicated would likely seem an understatement to someone not versed in Aboriginal law — and perhaps, it would also seem complicated to those who are.

The court proceedings first began in August 2005, and while the trial began in 2014, it's still only in the trial stages as of early December. According to Treaty 8 lawyers, closing arguments will be heard in April.

One court document suggested that there has been already 17,000 documents of undetermined size put forward by all parties as a result of the case — and that statement was made two years ago.

In addition, multiple First Nations outside of the original plaintiffs were added to the case — in two instances, as defendants along with the province.

One of them is the Kaska Dene Council, which represents three First Nations in northern B.C. and two in the Yukon who make up the Kaska Dene people. They want the Treaty 8 boundary to be extended further east than the federally accepted boundary.

“Most, if not all, of the Kaska traditional territory is located within the disputed western portion of Treaty 8,” the council claims in court documents.

The council is negotiating a new treaty with the province of B.C., but to do so, it must resolve any overlapping claims with Treaty 8 nations.

The McLeod Lake Indian Band, a Treaty 8 signatory, also asked to be added to the suit. According to its 2012 response to the civil claim, the band agrees that Treaty 8’s western boundary is along the Arctic-Pacific watershed, but disagrees that there is a threatened infringement of any right.

The band is asking that both claims from the province and the other Treaty 8 First Nations be struck from the courts, or that the other Treaty 8 First Nations have their boundary recognized.

Finally, other First Nations — the Tahltan, Takla Lake, and Tsay Kay Dene — have asked to be named intervenors in the case, though none have signed onto Treaty 8. The nations agree with Canada and the Treaty 8 nations about the location of the western boundary.

In total, 13 First Nations have some type of official interest in the outcome of this case, though some will not be impacted by the outcome.

Given the complexity of the case, and the possibility of appeal, it may be some time before a final judgment is rendered — perhaps in time for the 120th anniversary of the treaty signing.

- See more at: [http://www.alaskahighwaynews.ca/regional-news/treaty-8-nations-wrestle-with-province-over-western-boundary-1.2142446#s\(hash.pWFWzvOn.dpuf](http://www.alaskahighwaynews.ca/regional-news/treaty-8-nations-wrestle-with-province-over-western-boundary-1.2142446#s(hash.pWFWzvOn.dpuf)

## **Canadian company considers building a rail corridor to Ring of Fire**

By Len Gillis

Friday, January 1, 2016 5:50:51 EST PM



Canadian exploration company KWG resources Inc. is

It is possible the wheels might finally be rolling for the Ring of Fire project, at least from the point of view of KWG resources Inc., one of the key stakeholders in that mining venture.

KWG, a Canadian mining exploration company, has worked out a deal with China Railway First Survey and Design Institute (FSDI) for a feasibility study on a railway corridor into the project.

The Ring Of Fire refers to a large mining development located about 600 kilometres northwest of Timmins, in the remote McFaulds Lake area. The prospect is identified mainly as a chromite project, valued in the tens of billions of dollars. There are huge deposits of other metals there too, but so far none of the significant mining companies involved has moved forward with any sort of a mining operation. KWG and Noront Resources are the main players in the project.

Bruce Hodgman, a vice president and communications director for KWG, told The Daily Press this past week that the plans for the rail corridor would involve a link from the Ring of Fire south to the amalgamated community of Greenstone, Ontario (Geraldton, Longlac, Beardmore). The distance would be roughly 350 kilometres over land that was staked out by KWG.

“We’re the company that actually staked those claims, the high ground that leads into the Ring of Fire if you will; that sand ridge that leads right from Greenstone up to the project itself,” Hodgman explained.

“So it is the only feasible corridor because it has high ground and of course we have so much swamp up there it doesn’t make any sense to go anywhere else.”

He said KWG spent between \$15- and \$20-million on pre-engineering, surveying and soil-testing work on that corridor to make sure it could support a railroad. With that, the company presented the information to China Rail, which in the past 60 years has created nearly 48,000 kilometres of rail through some of the world’s most difficult terrain.

“They’ve had a look at that data and have decided they want to move forward and by moving forward it means they want to do a feasibility study on the rail corridor,” said Hodgson.

He said KWG president Frank Smeenk would be travelling to China in January to discuss issues of financing the study and what sort of return on investment will be expected by the Chinese. Hodgman said there is no firm estimate on the cost of the study at this point in time.

“If you’re talking strictly ballpark, I would put it in the ballpark of \$10-million,” said Hodgman. He said the expectation is that China Rail will finance the study.

Hodgman said by financing the feasibility study, the Chinese “will be looking for payment in either A) ferrochrome, or B) stainless steel ingots or billets, or possibly some combination of those products.”

If an agreement is reached on the study, Hodgman said he is hoping the study itself would take less than a year.

“Because we’ve already generated all that engineering data, because we spent \$15-million to \$20-million on drilling bore holes along that corridor and analyzing the material, I’m optimistic it would take something more in the range of give or take six months.”

Following that, there would be an environmental assessment and a permitting process, which would easily take longer than a year. The hope is that in a couple of years time, a new rail link will be created over the muskeg, allowing materials to be shipped in for the creation of the mines.

It would also allow the mining companies to begin shipping out chromite, an essential mineral for the creation of stainless steel.

“We have the ability in Canada to use cheap natural gas to make ferrochrome, to use cheap Quebec or Manitoba electricity to make stainless steel, by incorporating Canadian iron ore and Canadian nickel and Canadian ferrochrome that we now have access to,” he said.

Hodgman added that the current plan is to create a plant in Greenstone, for primary processing of the chromite.

“That’s our plan. We are in discussions with Greenstone to actually place a facility right there where our railhead meets with the east-west gas pipeline,” he said.

He said KWG has developed a process, with patents pending, that will allow the company to use natural gas to convert chromite into ferrochrome, instead of using extremely expensive electricity.

“Because we can do that we can now process this material in Ontario,” he said.

Although some critics might suggest that KWG is selling out Canadian resources to the Chinese, Hodgman said that is not the case.

“I would say if in fact yes we were just shipping our raw resources, unprocessed to China, then I would agree with that statement,” said Hodgman. “What we’re talking about is processing in Canada, creating jobs in Canada, generating tax revenue in Canada.”

Hodgman said instead of sending raw products out to other countries, finished products such as stainless steel could be produced here in Canada.

“We can re-invent stainless steel, something that has disappeared from Canada for decades,” he said.

“This is good for all Northern communities. I believe they will all benefit from this,” Hodgman added. Timmins Mayor Steve Black agrees.

“I believe getting the Ring of Fire into production anywhere will be a tremendous impact to all of Northern Ontario. With that being said, obviously the closer to Timmins a processing facility is the more direct benefit there is,” said Black.

“However Greenstone, for KWG, makes sense from an existing infrastructure standpoint when it comes to rail access and proximity to the site and this location has potential to benefit the Northeast significantly,” said the mayor.

Christy Marinig, the CEO of the Timmins Economic Development Corporation, said any new mining development that takes place in Greenstone is still close enough for the mining supply sector in Timmins to be able to bid on contracts there.

Black said he believes the rail project will still take lots of time and approvals before it becomes reality.

“Ultimately it would be great for the province to make a decision of what infrastructure set up would open up access to the mining area and have the most beneficial impact to First Nations communities in the north and then partner with the companies to see actual progress,” the mayor continued.

Hodgman agreed that the role of First Nations would be significant and a likely scenario would see First Nations actually managing and overseeing the rail corridor.

He said this would result in social benefits and economic benefits flowing through to First Nations communities.

“This is benefit for all of Ontario. This is not just for KWG,” he said. Hodgman said the new rail corridor would not be only for KWG, but would also be used by Noront and any other mining company with a stake in the Ring of Fire.

Hodgman is clearly optimistic about the negotiations with the Chinese in January.

"The Chinese are coming. You know, they want these raw materials and if it takes them building the railway and getting paid back in ferrochrome, then I think it is a win-win situation for Ontario and for the Chinese," he said.

"I think it is important that we say this is good for the benefit of everybody. It's not just the KWG story. This is something that is good for the First Nations, for Northern Ontario, for all the mining companies. This is good for everybody."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.timminspress.com/2016/01/01/canadian-company-considering-building-a-rail-corridor-to-ring-of-fire>

## **Tobique First Nation fishery mired in court battles, band council split**

**'It's a mess,' says sub-contractor after failing in court bid to continue fishing**

CBC News Posted: Jan 05, 2016 6:00 AM AT Last Updated: Jan 05, 2016 6:08 AM AT



A 1999 Supreme Court of Canada decision allowed First Nations fishing rights, either by their own labour or using another party as a contractor. ((CBC))

The future of the Tobique First Nation's commercial fishery is up in the air after the latest courtroom battle between the band and the companies running its commercial fishery. Last week, a Court of Queen's Bench judge quashed a last-minute attempt by Yarmouth Sea Products to continue fishing the band's licence as a subcontractor to a U.S. firm.

"We're not very pleased, obviously," said Gerard Doucet, the company's general manager.

"It's a mess."

The Yarmouth company was hired by Rhode Island-based Maritime Specialty Foods Inc. to fish for scallops and lobster on Tobique's commercial licence.

Doucet said Yarmouth Sea Products owns seven boats it used for the fishery, each of them employing a handful of people.



Both a Rhode Island company and its Yarmouth, N.S., subcontractor argued in court to continue its contract with Tobique First Nation, which ended Dec. 31.

Doucet refused to discuss the case further, referring CBC News to Peter Marion, the chief executive officer of Rhode Island-based Maritime Specialty Foods, whose agreement with Tobique First Nation expired at the end of 2015. Marion couldn't be reached for comment.

The dispute centres around Tobique's commercial fishery, which was established after the Supreme Court of Canada's 1999 Marshall decision that awarded commercial rights to First Nations.

Ottawa allocates fishing licences to bands, but the band governments can outsource the actual fishing to contractors, usually under agreements that see revenue flow back to the band.

In some cases, the contracts also see contractors hire band members.

## **'Troubling' business practices**

Court filings in the case contain allegations of what one judge called "troubling" business practices by Maritime Specialty Foods and allegations of "wrongdoing and negligent performance" in the way the company ran the fishery contract.

The rulings also suggest the Tobique band council was divided over the contract with Marion.

Marion's initial agreement with Tobique began Jan. 1, 2013 and ran until Dec. 31, 2015.

It gave the company the power to run the band's fishery in the Bay of Fundy and off Grand Manan, and named Marion as the "fishery designate," which gave him the authority to deal with the federal Department of Fisheries and Oceans.



Tobique First Nation Chief Ross Perley argued in court that a Rhode Island company hired to fish Tobique's licence had breached its contract. (CBC)

But Marion alleged in court that after new Chief Ross Perley took office in November 2014, he and some band councillors tried to interfere with the contract. The new chief, meanwhile, argued Marion breached the contract by improperly reporting catches, causing the band to lose money due to "poor management" and selling the band's fishing boats to a company Marion controlled without telling the band about the potential conflict of interest.

Perley also said Marion refused to attend a band council meeting he called in December 2014 to discuss the fishery, instead "convening a competing meeting" with seven band councillors in Bangor, Me., the same day.

## **Attempted to undermine council, chief**

In a November ruling, Justice William Grant wrote that Marion "wasted no time after the band council election in attempting to undermine the ability of the new council, and particularly, Chief Ross Perley, to conduct its business without outside interference."

By organizing the Bangor meeting, Marion "was clearly attempting to influence the band council's decision in respect to the management of the fishery for his, and his company's benefit.

"Not that trying to promote his interests is inherently wrong," Grant added, "but to do it in a duplicitous manner as he did, is clearly deserving of sanction."

In February 2015, six councillors, all of whom had attended the Maine meeting with Marion, voted to approve an extension of the contract to 2018.

But three months later, Perley cast the tie-breaking vote in a new band resolution that tried to sever Tobique's relationship with Marion.

That prompted Marion's first court action, in which Grant agreed the original contract was valid and issued an injunction forcing the band to honour the 2013-2015 agreement.

## Contract extension thrown out

But in November, he put off Marion's request to force the band to respect the 2018 extension.

Grant called the sequence of events leading to the extension, including the Maine meeting, "troubling."

He also pointed out it was not properly recorded in band council minutes.

To protect its subcontractor role, Yarmouth Sea Products made a last-ditch attempt for another injunction last week before a different judge, but was turned down, too.

Chief Perley couldn't be reached Monday to discuss how the band will run its fishery now that Marion and his company are no longer involved.

Doucet said Marion may appeal the decision.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/tobique-fishery-fundy-perley-lobster-1.3388996>

## First Nations land occupation aims to stop Site C

**Treaty 8 members say \$9 billion mega dam being built without First Nations' consent**

By Betsy Trumpener, CBC News Posted: Jan 05, 2016 6:54 PM PT Last Updated: Jan 05, 2016 9:25 PM PT



Treaty 8 First Nations elder Jack Askoty stands on an old growth logged tree stump on the Site C construction site. (Yvonne Tupper/Facebook)

A small number of Indigenous protesters are trying to halt Site C by occupying land near the mega dam construction site. Construction on the \$9 billion dollar dam project has been underway for four months near Fort St John.

"We have a peaceful protest camp," Yvonne Tupper, a Saulteau First Nation woman from Chetwynd, told CBC News.

"Site C is infringing our treaty rights. No Treaty 8 First Nation has ever given consent prior to construction. And it's an insult and an assault to continue construction while there are pending court cases."

Tupper says local Treaty 8 First Nations set up the protest camp in late December, with help from local ranchers and supporters, on traditional lands at Old Fort camp, on the south bank of the Peace River near the confluence with the Moberly River.



Yvonne Tupper posts signs at the BC Hydro construction site near the indigenous protest camp. (Yvonne Tupper/Facebook)

The bush camp is a half hour hike from a newly-built temporary Site C bridge. Protesters say the camp has neither cell service nor road access. Tupper says she hikes in from a rough back road. She says protesters are keeping warm in the bitter cold with wood fires, while sleeping in tents, lean-tos, and a hand-built trailer.

"We're not carrying weapons or anything; we're having a peaceful protest to identify our lands and post that this is Treaty 8 territory and you're trespassing," said Tupper.

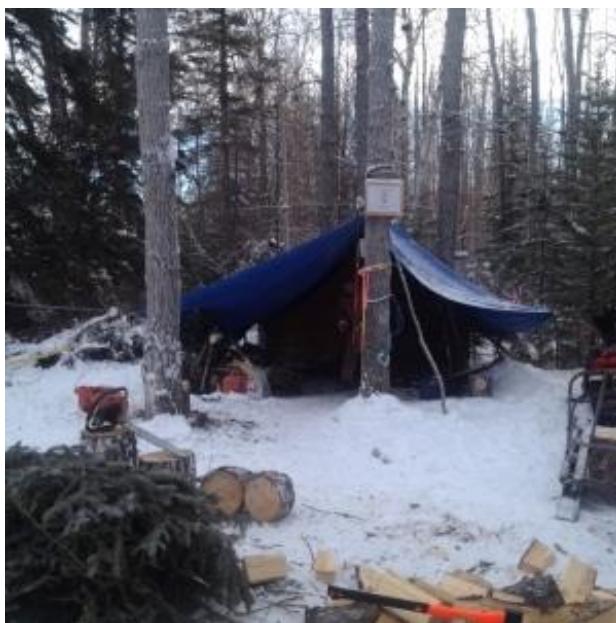
In a video exchange dated January 2 and posted on social media, Tupper, dressed in a toque and snowsuit and another protester speak on a snowy bridge with a man who identifies himself as a construction site security guard. The man tells them they have to leave "the active work site." The women notify him he is "trespassing" on Treaty 8 land.

North District RCMP Corporal Dave Tyreman says police have not been contacted. Tyreman responded to an inquiry from CBC News by advising, "You would have to inquire with BC Hydro as they have their own security."

## Hydro in discussion with protesters

BC Hydro says it is working to resolve First Nations concerns.

"BC Hydro respects the right of all individuals to peacefully protest and express their opinions about Site C in a safe and lawful manner," said BC Hydro spokesman Dave Conway.



Protesters have been occupying a Site C construction site near Fort St. John since late December. (Yvonne Tupper/Facebook)

"We are hopeful this can be resolved. We are in discussions with the protestors and local authorities to allow us to resume construction activities. BC Hydro is evaluating all options and will continue to monitor the situation."

The Site C dam project will flood a valley 77 kilometres long. It's long been controversial in the region and is fiercely opposed in some quarters. **Until now, non-indigenous ranchers were at the forefront of anti-Site C activism.**

The B.C. government says consultations with the local Treaty 8 First Nation began in August 2014 but wouldn't say if the two sides had reached a resolution.

Several lawsuits by environmental groups, citizens and First Nations to try to stop construction of the dam are proceeding through the courts, but the court cases haven't stopped the building process.

Construction of the almost \$9-billion project is touted to generate about 10,000 jobs while it floods 55 square kilometres of river valley between Fort St John and Hudson's Hope.

Proponents say Site C will boost Hydro's energy supply by eight per cent, enough electricity to power about 450,000 homes per year.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/first-nations-land-occupation-aims-to-stop-site-c-1.3391051>

# Saskatchewan Hunting Authorities Violating Our Rights: Indigenous Hunters

CP | By Chinta Puxley, The Canadian Press

Posted: 01/06/2016 4:30 pm EST Updated: 01/06/2016 4:59 pm EST

WINNIPEG — Indigenous hunters say they are being harassed and bullied by Saskatchewan authorities who don't understand their treaty right to provide food for their families.

The chief of Pine Creek First Nation said conservation officers raided two homes last month and confiscated moose meat harvested from their traditional territory, which crosses the Manitoba-Saskatchewan boundary.

Charlie Boucher said no charges have been laid but his people are being denied their inherent right to feed their families. Indigenous people were hunting on the land long before Canada or its provinces existed, he said.

"The Creator gave me that authority to harvest and take," Boucher said. "I beg for us to be understood."

Grand Chief Derek Nepinak with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs said indigenous hunters have been ticketed with non-compliance orders and harassed by farmers who feel the men have been trespassing for decades.

He said the two Pine Creek reserve homes were raided on Dec. 15 — the same day the Truth and Reconciliation Commission released its final report.

"This has to stop," he said. "This is an age of reconciliation."

While diabetes rates are soaring among First Nations, Nepinak said his people are being denied access to traditional, healthy food. At the same time, he said Saskatchewan hands out thousands of moose tags to sport hunters every year.



Manitoba Grand Chief Chief Derek Nepinak speaks with the media on Jan. 18, 2013, in Ottawa. (CP)  
"The Saskatchewan government is actively encouraging people to take down 6,000 moose for sport hunting every year but meanwhile, they are out there harassing our hunters that come from the treaty territories."

A spokesperson from Saskatchewan's Environment Ministry wasn't immediately available for comment.

Kevin Hart, Manitoba regional chief with the Assembly of First Nations, said he's disgusted by the "silent war" on the rights of his people. Hart said, as long as he can remember, he has hunted and gathered in various territories including Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario.

At times, Hart said he was accompanied by Manitoba's deputy premier, Eric Robinson.

"We've exercised our rights to hunt on the land," Hart said. "It's very disturbing in this day and age that our inherent and treaty rights are being infringed upon."

**Direct Link:** [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/01/06/indigenous-hunters-say-treaty-rights-being-violated-by-saskatchewan\\_n\\_8924218.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/01/06/indigenous-hunters-say-treaty-rights-being-violated-by-saskatchewan_n_8924218.html)

## **Three arrested at Site C demonstration in support of First Nations protest camp**

by Travis Lupick on January 7th, 2016 at 10:45 AM



Construction has already begun on the north bank of the Peace River where crews are enforcing stabilization for the Site C dam.

Three people were arrested at a Site C protest yesterday, January 6.

One person was taken into custody shortly after 10 a.m., according to an RCMP [media release](#). It states that individual along with another demonstrator were blocking vehicles from entering a private work site related to the BC Hydro project.

"Both parties were requested by police to move to the side of the road," reads the release. "When the man refused, he was advised by police that he was committing a criminal offence by not moving and advised to move to the side of the road. When the man still refused he was arrested for mischief."

The second person, a woman, allowed herself to be escorted to the side of the road by another protester in attendance.

Roughly two hours later, shortly after 12 p.m., RCMP responded to another call about demonstrators blocking traffic. The release states two members of that group failed to comply with instructions to move to the side of the road and, after being given “ample warning”, were taken into RCMP custody.

According to the *Alaska Highway News*, one of the protesters was subsequently charged with a crime. That was **Arthur Hadland**, a former regional district director of Peace River Regional District. The other two people arrested were named as **Penny Boden** and **Mark Meiers**.

It's reported there the January 6 demonstration on the roadway was in support of another group of protesters who have formed an encampment at the Rocky Mountain Fort on the west side of the Moberly River near Fort St. John.

A *Prince George Citizen* report describes that group as members of the Prophet First Nation who have established the camp in opposition to the dam's construction.

Several First Nations groups have filed legal challenges related to the project. They have expressed concerns that the dam will result in flooding a vast area, destroying areas of historical and cultural significance.



The provincial government approved the Site C dam for construction in December 2014. The megaproject estimated to cost \$8.8 billion will be built on a section of the Peace River roughly seven kilometres southwest of Fort St. John.

BC Hydro maintains the Site C dam is required to provide clean energy to British Columbia. A December 2015 media release claims the crown corporation is “committed to meeting its obligation to consult and accommodate Aboriginal groups”.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.straight.com/news/610411/three-arrested-site-c-demonstration-support-first-nations-protest-camp>

## **B.C. Site C dam protesters dig in and prepare for arrest**

**Long-time former politician Arthur Hadland among those arrested at the work site**

By Keven Drews, The Canadian Press Posted: Jan 07, 2016 3:42 PM PT Last Updated: Jan 07, 2016 3:43 PM PT



Helen Knott, shown in this undated handout photo, a member of the northeastern British Columbia's Prophet River First Nation, is among those protesting the construction of the \$9-billion Site C hydroelectric project. (Helen Knott/The Canadian Press)

First Nations protesting the construction of the \$9-billion Site C dam in northeastern British Columbia are preparing for their own arrests while they implore Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to intervene to stop the hydroelectric project.

Helen Knott of the Prophet River First Nation said in an interview from the protest site that she and six other demonstrators are camped at Rocky Mountain Fort, the former site of a North West Company fur-trading post established in 1794, near Fort St. John.

RCMP said they arrested three protesters on Wednesday who had been blocking an access road needed by BC Hydro crews to begin work on the dam, the third on the Peace River. The dam will create an 83-kilometre-long reservoir and flood the area where the protesters are camping.

## **Eviction notice issued**

The BC Hydro and Power Authority has issued an eviction notice, warning protesters that all contents of the camp set up on Dec. 31 will be removed and delivered to the RCMP.

Knott said the protesters are hunkering down while weathering snow and temperatures as low as -20 C, awaiting the possibility of arrest.

"It's not necessarily anybody goes into it with that idea, like, yeah, we're going to be arrested, right? It's that, yeah, we're committed to saving this tract of land and to, you know, actively use our treaty rights here," she said.

Knott said she would rather not be arrested but is willing to be at the camp and take a stand on the issue.

## **Protest camp to be logged**

Site C spokesman David Conway said the protest is affecting a small clearing area, but all other construction work on the project continues. Contractors had been prepared to log the area where protesters are camped.

The utility hopes to resolve the situation through ongoing discussions with protesters and local authorities in order to resume construction, he said.

"BC Hydro respects the right of all individuals to peacefully protest and express their opinions about Site C in a safe and lawful manner," he said in an email. "Our immediate concern is to ensure the safety of both Site C workers and the protesters."

Several First Nations and local residents have filed legal challenges over the dam, raising concerns about flooding and the impact the lake will create.

## **Flooding historic and sacred sites**

Art Napoleon of the Saulteau First Nation said in a phone interview from Victoria that the lake will flood the historic site and other sacred areas.

"That whole area was a culturally significant area for us, for hunting, trapping, fishing, gathering, a lot of history, all of our history, so that's our cultural institution and it's being raped, and it's still not enough," he said, adding he hopes Trudeau can get involved.

"Well, I don't know what exactly he can do, but it's worth a shot, isn't it?" said Napoleon.

The protest camp is in a remote area. Knott said once protesters leave the main highway, they must drive on rough, secondary roads for 90 minutes to two hours before making another seven-kilometre trip by foot or snowmobile.

The timber needs to be cleared before birds move in for nesting in the spring, and provincial Energy Minister Bill Bennett said the delay would make the project more expensive.

"Government wants to be respectful of people's right to express themselves and their right to protest. We accept that," Bennett said in an interview. "We have to balance that with

the right of the BC Hydro ratepayers to expect that this project would get built on time and budget."

## **Moving forward despite court challenges**

Bennett added that government agrees construction should proceed despite outstanding court cases. He said those in opposition appear to be using the legal system as a stalling tactic and also noted the courts have mostly sided with the utility.

Opponents have been stating their case for a long time, but "the fact of the matter is the majority of people in the province don't agree with them," Bennett said.

About 75 per cent of the 600 workers currently on the site are from B.C., Bennett added.

BC Hydro announced in December it would spend \$1.75 billion to build the earthen dam, foundation, two diversion tunnels and spillways.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/site-c-protesters-arrests-1.3394523>

## **Premier Brad Wall says Saskatchewan isn't bullying indigenous hunters**

THE CANADIAN PRESS

JASON WARICK, SASKATOON STARPHOENIX

**Published on:** January 7, 2016 | **Last Updated:** January 7, 2016 5:11 PM CST



Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall says he "categorically rejects" allegations that the government is harassing and bullying indigenous hunters

Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall says he “categorically rejects” allegations the provincial government is bullying indigenous hunters, but a Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations (FSIN) vice-chief disagrees.

“We’re seeing conservation officers being much more aggressive. Our rights are being infringed,” said FSIN vice-chief Robert Merasty.

Wall said the province respects treaty rights and that conservation staff have been very careful not to enforce anything beyond their mandate.

The chief of Pine Creek First Nation said Wednesday that conservation officers raided two homes last month and confiscated moose meat harvested from Pine Creek’s traditional territory, which crosses the Manitoba-Saskatchewan boundary.

Charlie Boucher said no charges have been laid, but his people are being denied their inherent right to feed their families.

Wall wouldn’t comment specifically on the case, but said treaty rights don’t trump provisions that allow provinces to manage conservation and all hunters need permission from landowners to hunt on private property.

Merasty said he understands conservation officers have an important job to do, and agrees a few indigenous people try to improperly take advantage of their treaty rights, but most of the seizures and citations of indigenous hunters are occurring on Crown lands and other “traditional” First Nations territory.

Merasty said conservation officers are seizing guns, fishing nets and other tools of First Nations peoples’ livelihoods with increasing regularity.

Merasty said the FSIN has been trying since last summer to get the government to sit down and talk about solutions. He thinks a protocol outlining the rules for all parties on all types of land would help, but no one from the government has responded, he said.

He also thinks conservation officers could benefit from cultural sensitivity training so they could understand the context and history of aboriginal people, Merasty added. He said it’s important to enforce conservation, but First Nations people have been doing a good job of that for thousands of years.

When the treaties were signed, “we agreed to peaceful coexistence. We need respect for our people,” Merasty said.

**Direct Link:** <http://thestarphoenix.com/news/local-news/premier-brad-wall-says-saskatchewan-isnt-bullying-indigenous-hunters>

## Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

# **Missing, murdered indigenous women pre-inquiry meetings begin in Thunder Bay, Ont.**

**Indigenous Affairs Minister, Status of Women Minister to meet with families on Wednesday**

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: Jan 04, 2016 7:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 04, 2016 4:36 PM ET



Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett (centre) and Minister of Status of Women, Patty Hajdu will meet with families of missing and murdered indigenous women in Thunder Bay on Wednesday. (CBC News)

Families of missing and murdered indigenous women will meet with two federal cabinet ministers in Thunder Bay, Ont., on Wednesday to help design a national public inquiry. Participants must register and are encouraged to take part in an orientation session on Tuesday before meeting with Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett and Minister of Status of Women Patty Hajdu, the following day.

An invitation to the so-called "engagement event" was sent out to Aboriginal organizations last week from the federal government's MMIWG Secretariat, asking them to distribute and share the email addressed to "Survivors, Families and Loved Ones".

"In the first phase of the pre-inquiry design process, we want to hear directly from you on how to design an inquiry that will result in concrete recommendations to work towards ending violence against Indigenous women and girls," said the email from Margaret Buist, director general of the secretariat.

The orientation sessions are to allow participants to meet each other and prepare them for the session with the Ministers by discussing "the kind of information needed from participants in order to inform an inquiry process," the email said.

## **'Difficult and painful'**

Nishnawbe Aski Nation, which represents 49 First Nations in northern Ontario is encouraging its community members to participate in the meetings.

"These consultations may be difficult and painful but it is important for the government to hear directly from the families and friends who have lost their loved ones," Deputy Grand Chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum said. "We will do everything possible to support them so they can share their experiences and expectations of the inquiry process."

Two pre-inquiry consultation meetings have already been held in Ottawa, a spokesperson for Indigenous Affairs said. The schedule for upcoming meetings is as follows:

- Thunder Bay, Ontario: January 6, 2016**
- Yellowknife, Northwest Territories: January 8, 2016**
- Whitehorse, Yukon: January 11, 2016**
- Vancouver, British Columbia: January 13, 2016**
- Prince George, British Columbia: January 15, 2016**

More meeting locations and dates will be added as they are confirmed, according to the department. The meetings are closed to the public and to media.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/missing-murdered-indigenous-women-pre-inquiry-meetings-begin-in-thunder-bay-ont-1.3385621>

## **Family hangs neckties across Winnipeg in memory of missing indigenous men**

**Family of Colten Pratt, who has been missing since 2014, inspired by MMIW red ribbon campaign**

CBC News Posted: Jan 03, 2016 10:04 PM CT Last Updated: Jan 03, 2016 10:20 PM CT



Colten Pratt's mother Lydia Daniels wraps a men's tie around a guard rail on Long Plain First Nation. (Supplied)

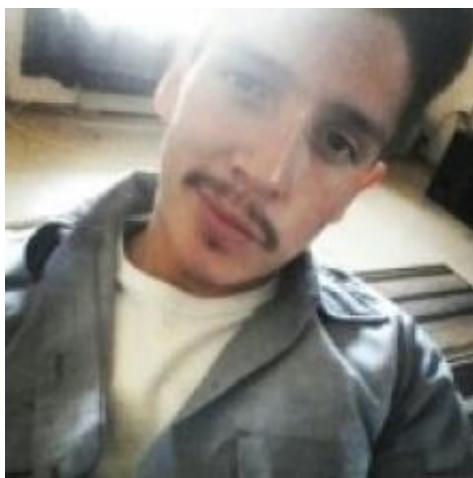
The family of a man who went missing over a year ago has launched a campaign to raise awareness for missing and murdered indigenous men.

Colten Pratt went missing on Nov. 7 of 2014. He was 26 years old at the time. Pratt was last seen at the bus shelter at the corner of Main Street and Redwood Avenue, near the Billy Mosienko bowling alley, police said.

On Saturday, Pratt's mother Lydia Daniels, his aunt Jacqueline Daniels and other family members hung neckties across Winnipeg in his memory. Ties were left on posts on the Redwood Bridge, at The Forks, in Osborne Village and downtown near the Marlborough Hotel, which is one of the places where he was last spotted.

Pratt's relatives came up with the necktie idea after being moved by the Red Cloth Ribbons Memorial campaign led by Althea Guiboche and others. That group started stringing bits of red ribbon on bridges around the city in recent weeks in honour of missing and murdered indigenous women.

Daniels said the investigation into Pratt's disappearance is still active and the family is encouraging people who may have details about what happened to come forward.



Colten Pratt was last spotted in downtown Winnipeg on Nov. 7, 2014. (Winnipeg Police Service)

Daniels added that the necktie campaign isn't just about her missing nephew.

"It's not all Colten. You know, we desperately want him home, we want to find out what happened to him [but] we know that there's other families," she said.

Hanging up the neckties has helped the family cope with their loss, Daniels added.

"It felt like it was something very positive.... It's the whole issue of suspended grief — we don't even want to call it that, but the suspended worry of not knowing," said Daniels.

"We do these sort of things to keep Colten in the media and keep Colten in the public mind — it helps us."

A Facebook page about the necktie campaign has been set up and the family has already started to receive positive feedback from the community, Daniels said.

The neckties have also been hung throughout Long Plain First Nation, where Colten and his family are from.

Pratt is described as 5-foot-10, weighing approximately 160 pounds, with short brown hair and brown eyes. He was last seen wearing a grey T-shirt, brown plaid jacket, blue jeans and a grey tuque, as seen in the photo.

Anyone who is able provide any information that could assist in the investigation is urged to contact the Winnipeg Police Service's missing persons unit at 204-986-6250.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/family-hangs-neckties-across-winnipeg-in-memory-of-missing-indigenous-men-1.3387970>

## **Carolyn Bennett to meet with families of missing, murdered women in Yellowknife, Whitehorse**

**Federal department of Indigenous Affairs asking people what national inquiry should look like**

CBC News Posted: Jan 04, 2016 7:00 AM CT Last Updated: Jan 04, 2016 9:46 AM CT



Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett announced the first steps for her government's promised inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women in Ottawa on Dec. 8. Bennett will visit Yellowknife on Friday and Whitehorse on Jan. 11 to speak to families affected. (CBC News)

Carolyn Bennett, the federal minister of Indigenous Affairs, will be in Yellowknife this week to speak to the families of missing and murdered indigenous women about what they want to see in the upcoming national inquiry.

The Liberals have committed to spending \$40 million over two years on the examination of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls in a much-awaited national public inquiry.

Bennett will be in Yellowknife on Friday and Whitehorse on Monday to have private conversations with people affected.

"The meetings are being held with families and loved ones and survivors of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls to ask them what they'd like to see happen with the inquiry," says Margaret Buist, director general of the pre-inquiry process.

Buist says the department is travelling to regions across the country, to ask people: "'what would you like to see happen with this inquiry?'"

"How long should it be? Who should be leading it? What topics should it cover? Should it look at anything related to police investigations? Should it look at prevention? Those sorts of things," she explains.

## **Submissions will help shape inquiry**

Indigenous Affairs sent invitations directly to family members and loved ones, as well as frontline organizations that work with survivors and families.

"Out of these regional meetings, online submissions, mail-in submissions, phone calls on our 1-800 number, we're taking input and submissions from people across the country as to what they'd like to see about the inquiry," Buist says.

"It's hoped that the inquiry itself will start up in the summer of this year, having taken into account everything heard from people during this process we're undergoing."

The meetings will continue throughout January and February.

Anyone who wishes to participate can contact the department through its [website](#).

## Corrections

- An earlier version of this story said that Carolyn Bennett will be in Yellowknife on Wednesday. In fact, she will be in the city on Friday.

Jan 04, 2016 9:43 AM CT

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/mmiw-inquiry-yellowknife-whitehorse-1.3386273>

## Meetings ramp up ahead of MMIW inquiry

By [Monique Muise](#) Global News, January 4, 2016 2:05 pm



Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett is set to meet with survivors and family members to discuss the upcoming inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

Survivors and the families of missing and murdered indigenous women will have eight opportunities to make their voices heard over the next three weeks as a federal inquiry into the widespread violence against First Nations women and girls begins to take shape.

Inquiry design meetings are set to be held in northern Ontario, British Columbia, Quebec, Nova Scotia and throughout the territories between Jan. 6 and Jan. 22. The minister of Indigenous Affairs, Carolyn Bennett, and Minister of Status of Women, Patty Hajdu, are expected to be in attendance.

The purpose of the meetings is to figure out the form and scope of the eventual inquiry, which could begin later this year. The federal government announced the initial consultation process last month in Ottawa, saying a public inquiry will require input from survivors and families, right from the start.

The federal secretariat in charge of the inquiry has said it sent invitations to local Aboriginal groups across the country to take part in the consultation meetings, asking them to distribute and share the invites with “survivors, families and loved ones.”

But Bill Beauregarde, a community co-ordinator and administrator at Aboriginal Front Door Society in Vancouver, said he didn’t receive any information about the date or time of the upcoming meeting in his community. The Aboriginal Front Door Society works directly with First Nations individuals in the city’s Downtown East Side, considered the country’s most impoverished postal code.

Beauregarde said he estimates that if people know precisely where and when the Jan. 13 meeting in Vancouver is being held, “a minimum of 40 people” would show up. He added that he wants the government to understand that, from his perspective, an inquiry without the power to prosecute is unlikely to yield results.

“If it’s a criminal inquiry it might have some bite to it,” Beauregarde explained. “They make a whole list of recommendations … and it doesn’t go any further than that. But if it turns into a criminal inquiry, with people being charged, then they have to follow through.”

The meeting schedule for the next three weeks is as follows:

- Thunder Bay, Ontario: Jan. 6.
- Yellowknife, Northwest Territories: Jan. 8.
- Whitehorse, Yukon: Jan. 11.
- Vancouver, B.C.: Jan. 13.
- Prince George, B.C.: Jan. 15.
- Halifax, N.S.: Jan. 20.
- Quebec City, Que.: Jan. 21.
- Montreal, Que.: Jan. 22.

Calls to several other First Nations organizations in those communities were not immediately returned on Monday.

One meeting has already been held in Ottawa, on Dec. 11. Although the consultations are closed to the media (participants must contact the government and register in advance), summaries of what was discussed are being posted to the federal website devoted to the project.

Survivors, family members or loved ones wishing to attend an upcoming meeting can call 1-877-535-7309 or email [AADNC.EFFAAD-IMMIWG.AANDC@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca](mailto:AADNC.EFFAAD-IMMIWG.AANDC@aadnc-aandc.gc.ca)

The Liberal Party platform estimated that a national public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women would cost \$40 million over two years, starting in 2016. Bennett has since suggested that the budget could be in flux.

**Direct Link:** <http://globalnews.ca/news/2431654/meetings-ramp-up-ahead-of-mmiw-inquiry/>

## **Police renew call for help in search for First Nation woman missing in northern Ontario**

**Charnelle Masakeyash last seen Nov. 6, 2015 near Pickle Lake, Ont.**

CBC News Posted: Jan 05, 2016 11:40 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 05, 2016 11:40 AM ET



Police say Charnelle Masakeyash, 26, of Mishkeegogamang First Nation was reported missing on Nov. 8, 2015. (Stephanie Masakeyash/Facebook)

Ontario Provincial Police are again asking anyone with information about Charnelle Masakeyash to come forward.

The woman from Mishkeegogamang First Nation was last seen on Nov. 6, 2015 about one kilometre south of Pickle Lake, Ont., according to police.

First Nations volunteers, provincial police and Canadian Rangers conducted an extensive ground search for the 26-year-old in November. A police helicopter was also used in the search.

Members of Mishkeegogamang First Nation are continuing the search.

Masakeyash is described as 5' 7' tall, 130 lbs, medium build, with straight, shoulder length black hair, usually worn in a ponytail and brown eyes.

Police say in the past, Masakeyash has spent time in both Thunder Bay and Winnipeg.

The OPP criminal investigations branch is overseeing the investigation into Masakeyash's disappearance.

Anyone with information about Masakeyash, or anyone who may have seen her is asked to contact the Pickle Lake OPP Detachment at **807-928-2211**, Ontario Provincial Police at **1-888-310-1122** or, to remain anonymous, Crime Stoppers at **1-800-222-8477** (TIPS)

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/police-renew-call-for-help-in-search-for-first-nation-woman-missing-in-northern-ontario-1.3389981>

## **Indigenous Affairs minister will meet local families and officials**

The nation's promised inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women is taking much-awaited baby steps toward becoming a reality.

By Aimee O'Connor on January 4, 2016

The nation's promised inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women is taking much-awaited baby steps toward becoming a reality.

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett will make her way to Whitehorse next Monday to have private discussions with families and loved ones of victims as well as territorial representatives.

Many indigenous families and organizations have called for the federal government to take action on the inquiry. The newly elected Liberals have committed to spend \$40 million over two years to get started.

But before the inquiry can be called to action, the structure of it is first on the agenda.

The federal government states it will only be designed after hearing the ideas and perspectives of all the people affected.

“To make sure these voices are heard, a national engagement process will take place over the coming months,” the government’s website for the inquiry states.

After the “engagement process” concludes, the government is to report back on what has been heard from all participants.

“The views and ideas expressed by all participants will allow the government to develop the inquiry, including the mandate, the terms of reference, the format of the inquiry and the timeline,” the website states.

An overview from the first meeting in Ottawa on Dec. 11 has already been posted online – one of the main takeaways being the participants’ desire to be directly involved in the design of the inquiry.

One suggestion was to implement a panel comprising of a strong indigenous female lead, representatives from family members and loved ones, elders, and skilled indigenous experts.

Prior discussions were led by Bennett, Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould and Status of Women Minister Patty Hadju.

Wilson-Raybould and Hadju will not be attending Monday’s meeting in Whitehorse.

In 2014, the RCMP identified a total of 1,181 missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.whitehorsetar.com/News/indigenous-affairs-minister-will-meet-local-families-and-officials>

## **Robyn Urback: Why not a national inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women – and men?**

**ROBYN URBACK** | January 6, 2016 2:44 PM ET



THE CANADIAN PRESS/Justin Tang To do this inquiry right, Carolyn Bennett can't only listen to half of the families dealing with a missing or murdered relative.

Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett will begin meeting with the families of missing and murdered aboriginal women in Yellowknife and Whitehorse this week, to consult on the

nature and scope of the upcoming public inquiry. According to Margaret Buist, director general of the “pre-inquiry” process, members of her department will simultaneously be travelling across the country asking the families of indigenous women, “What would you like to see happen with this inquiry?”

While the government is soliciting opinions from certain indigenous families, others are doing just about everything they can just to have their voices heard. Among them is a Manitoba mother who has been looking for her child, who disappeared in November 2014 at the age of 26. The only problem is: her child is male.

Lydia Daniels has been looking for her son, Colten Pratt, who is Ojibway and Dakota, for more than a year. Recently, she started her own grassroots campaign to raise awareness about Canada’s missing aboriginal men by tying neckties around bridges in her community of Long Plain First Nation, as well as in downtown Winnipeg. Daniels said she got the idea for what she calls the “Men’s Neck Tie Awareness Campaign” from the Red Cloth Ribbon Campaign, which also originated in Manitoba to raise awareness for missing and murdered aboriginal women.

There is every reason why Bennett should include mothers like Daniels in her pre-inquiry consultations: while aboriginal Canadians were six times more likely to be the victims of homicide than non-aboriginal Canadians in 2014, aboriginal men were three times more likely to be victims than women, according to Statistics Canada. Between 1980 and 2012, StatsCan recorded 1,750 aboriginal male homicide victims and 745 aboriginal female homicide victims. The RCMP recorded at least 1,181 missing or murdered indigenous women during the same period; it did not release data on missing or murdered aboriginal men.

Regional data offer better insight into unsolved missing persons cases: according to RCMP information provided to the Saskatchewan Association of Chiefs of Police, 38 aboriginal men and 18 aboriginal women went missing in the province between 1940 and 2014. In the Northwest Territories, eight aboriginal women and 35 aboriginal men have gone missing between 1940 and 2014. Though the picture is by no means complete (partly because of the RCMP’s arcane selectiveness in its collection and publication of data) the trends show that aboriginal men go missing and murdered in Canada at least as much — and almost certainly more — than aboriginal women. So why would a national inquiry deliberately ignore all available evidence and focus exclusively on women?

Canada needs action to alleviate the suffering of many aboriginal Canadians, rather than continued study. Decades of analysis conducted by various governments, academics, non-governmental organizations, and grassroots collectives have told us that the causes are a combination of complicated socio-economic factors, including widespread unemployment, racism, the effects of colonization, substance abuse, poverty, mental health issues and inadequate access to proper housing, transportation and even water. It is far from clear that the two years and \$40 million dedicated to this inquiry wouldn’t be better spent on immediate action, now, rather than further investigation that will likely reiterate what we already know.

That said, if this government is committed to conducting a national inquiry — and by every indication, it is — it should do it properly. When Carolyn Bennett announced preliminary consultations with families back in November, she said that, “The more I listen to families, the more I understand they have many instincts and much knowledge about the way we go forward in order to get this right.”

To do it right, however, Bennett can't only listen to half of the families dealing with a missing or murdered relative. For two years and \$40 million, the Liberals owe it to all Canadians to do this once, and to do it correctly. Gender parity works both ways. Bennett's next stop should be at the Long Plain First Nation in Manitoba, to speak with Lydia Daniels about her missing son, Colten.

**Direct Link:** <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/robyn-urback-why-not-a-national-inquiry-into-missing-and-murdered-aboriginal-women-and-men>

## **Ottawa launches online survey about inquiry into murdered aboriginal women**

KATHERINE WILTON, MONTREAL GAZETTE

Published on: January 5, 2016 | Last Updated: January 5, 2016 7:28 PM EST



**Hundreds of people take part in a march to honour the memories of missing and murdered native women and girls. The march took place in Montreal on Sunday October 4, 2015.**

Before Ottawa holds an inquiry into missing and murdered aboriginal women, it's giving Canadians a chance to weigh in on several aspects of the inquiry. The government launched an online survey on Tuesday to give interested parties a chance to provide input into who should conduct the investigation, who should be heard and what issues should be addressed.

"We need to hear from all Canadians — especially survivors, families and loved ones, Indigenous organizations, and provinces and territories — to help us identify the best process for this inquiry," said Carolyn Bennett, the Indigenous and Northern Affairs minister.

The online survey is part of the government's plan to have "an inclusive and respectful engagement process," said Justice minister Jody Wilson-Raybould. "An inquiry into missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls can only be set up after hearing from those directly affected," she said in a press release.

In December, both ministers met with the families of some of the missing women and said they were deeply moved by their stories.

The survey asks several questions such as who should head the inquiry, who should participate and how should indigenous groups be included in the inquiry?

Last month, the Trudeau government announced it would hold a \$40-million public inquiry to address the high number of missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls across Canada.

Although native women make up four per cent of Canada's female population, 16 per cent of all women murdered in Canada between 1980 and 2012 were aboriginal women. Aboriginal women are three times more likely to report experiencing violence, according to government statistics. A 2014 report by the RCMP revealed there were 1,181 murdered and missing indigenous women between 1980 and 2012.

The Liberals promised the inquiry during the federal election campaign. The previous Conservative government refused to appoint an inquiry, saying it would be costly and not elicit any new information. The online survey can be found at [bit.ly/1Z4aqKO](http://bit.ly/1Z4aqKO).

**Direct Link:** <http://montrealgazette.com/news/ottawa-launches-online-survey-about-inquiry-into-murdered-aboriginal-women>

## **Families of murdered, missing indigenous women meet to discuss goals of inquiry**

"The families will remind you that the hurt and the loss go on forever. They will never be healed as though this is a cure," Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett says of pre-inquiry consultations.



Indigenous and Northern Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett said one sad truth she has been learning from families is that for many, an inquiry is a way to prevent this from happening to other families, but cannot heal what happened to them.

**By: Joanna Smith** Ottawa Bureau reporter, **Tanya Talaga** Global Economics Reporter, Published on Wed Jan 06 2016

OTTAWA—The families of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls have been gathering for years — to share their stories, support each other and call for action — but this time was different.

Now that the federal government has committed to holding a national inquiry into the more than 1,200 First Nations, Métis and Inuit women and girls who have been murdered or gone missing in Canada, families came together in Thunder Bay Wednesday to share their hopes and fears of what it should set out to achieve.

“A lot of people were feeling that they were finally going to have an opportunity to have some closure,” said deputy grand chief Anna Betty Achneepineskum of Nishnawbe Aski Nation, which represents 49 First Nations in northern Ontario.

“Maybe the justice may not take place, but I think even being provided an opportunity to be heard on their concerns and having an opportunity to change the present process,” said Achneepineskum, who was at the pre-inquiry consultation meeting Wednesday afternoon.

So were Indigenous Affairs Minister Carolyn Bennett and Status of Women Minister Patricia Hajdu, who along with Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould are hearing from families, national aboriginal organizations, frontline service providers and other stakeholders as part of their pre-inquiry consultation process.

There is also an online survey and discussion guide seeking input from anyone else who wants to contribute, which Bennett said families can also use if they are unable to attend the meetings or prefer to share their ideas in that way.

Summaries of what happens are the family meetings, which are closed to the public and media, are also being posted online.

Mishkeegogamang Chief Connie Gray MacKay called the pre-inquiry meeting “very fresh” for herself and the members of Mishkeegogamang, who temporarily left their search for missing community member Charnelle Masakeyash in order to voice their concerns in Thunder Bay.

“We need an inquiry commissioner who is familiar with northern concerns,” Gray said.

“Everything for us is very fresh right now.”

Masakeyash, 26, has been missing since Nov. 6, 2015 and an extensive Mishkeegogamang-led ground search has been underway for the 26-year-old mother in the area of Pickle Lake, Ont.

Mishkeegogamang is more than 500 km north of Thunder Bay and home to 900 people. Gone from this small community are 11 women and men, mothers and sisters, brothers and friends.

Northern Ontario's often remote and isolated indigenous communities have different issues than most others and that issue should be accounted for in an inquiry, Gray said.

For instance, in the north the geographic area is vast and often police are not able to respond for a long while. Winter weather also hampers searches. She said that police could not respond to Masakeyash's disappearance for days.

"The families will remind you that the hurt and the loss go on forever. They will never be healed as though this is a cure. This is a process and it is a process that helps on the healing journey, but this is ongoing loss and sadness forever," said Bennett.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2016/01/06/indigenous-affairs-minister-carolyn-bennett-says-families-of-missing-murdered-indigenous-women-will-not-bring-healing.html>

## **Trigger Warning Added To Indigenous Affairs Page On MMIW Inquiry**

**The Huffington Post Canada | By Jessica Chin**

Posted: 01/06/2016 1:00 pm EST Updated: 01/06/2016 1:59 pm EST

Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada has added a warning to one of its pageabout the government's upcoming national inquiry into missing and murdered women and girls. A warning explains the website "deals with topics which may cause trauma to readers."

"The Government of Canada recognizes the need for safety measures to minimize the risks associated with traumatic subject matter," the website reads.

The text points to a toll-free crisis line for anyone who is "triggered and needs help or support while reading the content on this website."



*A screenshot of the Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada website*

Valerie Hache, a spokesperson for the department told The Huffington Post Canada the trigger warning was added Dec. 8, 2015, the day the federal government announced its intention to hold a national inquiry.

A similar approach was taken with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission website, Hache said.

Trigger warnings are meant to warn readers about harmful content they're about to see, such as photos, videos, or descriptions that could create flashbacks to a scarring experience of sexual assault, racial violence, homophobia or transphobia, etc.

Kate Manne, a philosophy professor at Cornell University, wrote in The New York Times the practice of including trigger warnings began in Internet communities for people with post-traumatic stress disorder.

The warnings are meant to flag possible trauma-inducing content to readers, giving them the option to choose whether or not they wanted to engage.

She said triggered reactions are not just unpleasant, they can overtake our consciousness, like a war veteran's flashbacks.

Many criticisms of her op-ed said that real life does not come with trigger warnings, or that "human history is full of 'triggers.'"

But Manne wrote that it's not about shielding people from uncomfortable topics.

"It's not about coddling anyone. It's about enabling everyone's rational engagement."

**Direct Link:** [http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/01/06/trigger-warning-indigenous\\_8923176.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2016/01/06/trigger-warning-indigenous_8923176.html)

## Special Topic: Residential Schools, TRC, & '60s Scoop

# Children deserve 'our very best efforts,' says Hiltz in New Year's address

By [Art Babych](#) on January, 02 2016



In 2015, it has been a little child who has “moved the heart of the world, the heart of the church, the heart of each and every one of us in some way or another,” notes Archbishop Fred Hiltz in his annual New Year’s Day address at Christ Church Cathedral, Ottawa.

## Ottawa

In his annual [New Year's address](#) at Christ Church Cathedral, the primate of the Anglican Church of Canada, Archbishop Fred Hiltz, said the church must ensure that the interests and well-being of children, in Canada and around the world, are upheld.

Hiltz said he was struck by the number of times that it has been a little child who has “moved the heart of the world, the heart of the church, the heart of each and every one of us in some way or another.”

He recalled the “gut-wrenching moment” on September 3, when the lifeless body of three-year-old Alan Kurdi washed up on a beach in Turkey. “Still fully clothed, his lifeless body grabbed the heart of the world and jolted us to the immensity of the Syrian refugee crisis,” he said.

The photo of Alan Kurdi “sparked countless images of other innocent children who have suffered through the war in Syria,” said Hiltz.

As Syrian families sought refuge in Europe via unsafe and overcrowded boats, political leaders scrambled to meet the crisis, said the primate. Countries, including Canada, came forward to receive refugees, said Hiltz. “It is heartening to see how the federal

government is working hard to honour its pledge to receive and settle 25,000 Syrian refugees by the end of February."

And in that "massive sponsorship effort," he added, the church is playing a significant role. "A number of our dioceses are Refugee Sponsorship Agreement Holders, and numerous parishes are receiving refugees and accompanying them faithfully as they settle in Canada."

But Hiltz also noted that, "as huge as the Syrian crisis is, it is in fact but one among many in which some 60 million of our brothers and sisters worldwide are refugees."

The Primate's World Relief and Development Fund (PWRDF), the relief and development arm of the Anglican Church of Canada, has been accompanying refugees in other places including Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt, Kenya, and South Sudan, he said. "Our work has been in providing food aid and medical supplies in partnership with Action by Churches Together (ACT)."

But even as the church helps refugees on the run, "we cannot forget the thousands and thousands who have spent most, if not all their lives, in United Nations Refugee Camps," said Hiltz. "Many of them are children and they know no life outside a camp. We just cannot forget them. Indeed, if anything, our commitment to accompany them must be enhanced and strengthened."

"The tending of these holy innocents we do in the name of The Child who within weeks of his birth was a refugee in Egypt, and within weeks of his coming death was teaching us that in providing and clothing and medical aid to those in need — and in welcoming the stranger — we are tending him."

In September, world leaders endorsed 17 Sustainable Development Goals under the overall theme "No one left behind." Hiltz said these goals represent "immense hope for the children of the world and especially the most vulnerable."

"Our commitment in working to achieve these goals are in keeping with the Gospel of the Holy Child, whose birth in a particular time and place in history has, as St. John and St. Paul would remind us, a cosmic dimension."

Hiltz also said high-profile "Calls to Action," particularly in the nation's capital, should not be allowed to overshadow those related to the well-being of Indigenous children as recommended by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC).

"We cannot allow that to happen," Hiltz said. "The children deserve our very best efforts and nothing less will do."

The TRC, which released its final report on December 15, offered 94 calls to action on the part of governments, churches, public institutions and non-Indigenous Canadians as a path to reconciliation with Canada's Indigenous citizens.

The recommendations were based on the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). "It is of some great significance, I think, that the first of these calls addresses child welfare," Hiltz said. The first call to action includes an affirmation of the right of Aboriginal communities to set up and maintain their own child welfare agencies.

Hiltz noted that the TRC recommendations included many references to Aboriginal children, including concerns about their health, the effects of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, the pandemic suicide among teens, the high rates of incarcerations of young Aboriginal men and women and the tragedy of missing and murdered Aboriginal women and girls.

"There are also references to children in eliminating the gaps in federal funding for education between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal children and between those schools on and off reserves," he said. "Knowing that physical activity is a fundamental element of health and well-being, increased funding for sports programs is also lifted up."

The primate told the gathering he is heartened that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau has declared that a renewed relationship with Indigenous Peoples is a priority for the government.

The church will respond to the TRC's Calls to Action, said Hiltz, "in the name of the Christ who would take children in his arms and bless them, who would speak sternly of the punishment that would ensure if anyone lifted a hand to hurt them; in the name of the Christ who would go with distraught parents to lay his hands upon their little ones who were sick; in the name of the Christ who would place children in the midst of adults as an example of the way in which they ought to embrace life and the wonder of God's ways with the world."

Around the world, the primate noted that Canadian Anglicans are helping to promote the welfare of children through "All Mothers and Children Count, the Maternal Newborn and Child Healthcare initiative of PWRDF. The five-year program —funded through a \$17.7 million agreement between PWRDF and the Department of Foreign Affairs, Trade and Development Canada (DFATD), now known as Global Affairs Canada — will focus on Mozambique, Tanzania, Burundi, and Rwanda.

Hiltz also revealed that he and his wife, Lynne Samway Hiltz, are anticipating holding their first grandchild in a few weeks. "I wonder what kind of a world she will grow up in, and will we so live out our lives as to help her 'have an inquiring and discerning heart, the courage to will and to persevere, a spirit to know and love God, and the gift of joy and wonder in the works of God's hand'" (From The Liturgy for Baptism, BAS, p 160).

The primate also devoted a portion of his address to climate change. He noted that he and his principal secretary, Archdeacon Paul Feheley, were in Paris in December when world leaders — gathered for the United Nations Climate Change Conference — reached an agreement on slowing the pace of global warming through commitments to significant reductions in carbon emissions. “Some have criticized the agreement saying it is not binding,” Hiltz said. “Others see in this truth, the enormous amount of strong political will necessary to embrace and honour the agreement through specific actions on the part of government and industry across all the countries party to it.”

As global leaders met, Hiltz said he and Feheley joined thousands at an ecumenical service in Notre Dame. He noted, in particular, a message issued by the Council of Christian Churches in France, which said, “Aware of the impact of the lifestyle of the most developed countries, we need to call into question the logic of our consumption and to allow our attitudes and actions to experience conversion, practising restraint and simplicity, not as a form of heroic renunciation but as a form of joyful sharing... Our hope as Christians rests in our belief that our world is not destined to disappear but to be transformed and that human beings capable of self destruction are also able to unite and to choose that which is good.”

As “citizens of the world” Christians “were called to prayer, acknowledging that creation is suffering because of us,” said Hiltz. “Acknowledging the poor who are suffering disproportionately, we asked for humility and strength in a call to conversion in our ways with the earth, our common home: its lands and resources; its waters and its atmosphere; and all its species of every kind. What is called for, as environmentalist David Suzuki has said, “[is] a massive shift of spirit” and what a young scholar from Kenya has described as a call to be “healers of the earth” for the sake of our children.”

At the end of his address, Hiltz led the congregation in reading together a letter to the children of the Anglican Communion, written a decade earlier by delegates to the Anglican Consultative Council (XIII) meeting in Nottingham, England.

Later, he and his wife joined Bishop John Chapman and his wife, Catherine Chapman, along with Cathedral Dean Shane Parker and his wife, Katherine Shadbolt Parker, in greeting guests at the New Year’s Day Levee in the new cathedral hall.

- See more at: <http://www.anglicanjournal.com/articles/children-deserve-our-very-best-efforts-says-hiltz-in-new-year-s-address#sthash.r0kweHhW.dpuf>

## **Skeleton of aboriginal girl, buried 180 years ago on Alberta farm, becomes unlikely 'bridge builder'**

**OTIENA ELLWAND, POSTMEDIA NEWS | January 5, 2016 11:20 AM ET**



Handout - PostmediaA ceremony was held in October to re-bury the bones of a young aboriginal person found on a farm near Viking, Alberta.

She was a girl of high status with beads around her neck, rings on her fingers and a thimble. Besides those treasures, all that was left of her was a perfectly intact skeleton, carefully laid to rest less than a metre underground.

When Brian Rozmahel found her skeleton on his farm, it changed his life. It was the beginning of a spiritual journey for him and the girl became a symbol of reconciliation for the community.

A badger led him to the girl's burial site on his organic farm outside Viking last August. His family has been farming on the land since 1937 and this was the first discovery of human remains.

The badger had unearthed the girl's skull, but Rozmahel didn't realize what he was looking at until he turned it over and "we met eye to eye," he said. It was tawny brown with the skull and upper jaw intact, he said.

"I was kind of in shock for a minute, I didn't know what to think. I wasn't afraid. I didn't think it was a crime scene," he said.



Some of the brass rings found on the finger bones of a young aboriginal woman who died in the 1830s. The skeleton was found on a farm near Viking in August.

But the RCMP had to treat it as one until they could rule it out. They cordoned off the area and stationed an officer there for two nights while the bones were examined.

Forensic anthropologist Pamela Mayne Correia determined it was a historic find. The bones belonged to a young aboriginal person who was probably 13 or 14 when they died. Because the bones had already been disturbed by the badger, it was decided that the skeleton should be removed and then reburied so none of it would get lost, she said.

An archeological team exhumed the remains, centimetre by centimetre, over five days. Almost the entire skeleton was present. Among the bones, the team found more than 4,000 tiny white and blue glass beads, about 15 brass buttons, about 10 brass rings and a thimble. Based on the items she was buried with, it was determined the bones likely belonged to a young girl of some prominence who died in the 1830s, said Caroline Hudecek-Cuffe, a regional archeologist with the province.

When some of the remains were removed from the property for analysis, Rozmahel said he felt a sense of emptiness, that the farm wasn't the same without its indigenous "princess."

Plans were soon made to re-bury the skeleton somewhere safe from grazing cattle and tractors. Rozmahel offered a spot on his property not far from the original plot, in between some wetlands and poplar trees.

On a rainy day in October, elders and the regional chief for the Assembly of First Nations attended the funeral. Four of Rozmahel's six grandchildren were there, as well as RCMP officers in their red serge, the archeology team and other government officials.

There was a pipe ceremony and smudging, drumming and singing, the exchange of gifts and offerings of food. Then the men threw handfuls of dirt on the girl's new pine casket, made by a restoration carpenter with the provincial government. It was the second pipe ceremony Rozmahel had been part of on his property. The elders had previously attended the first grave to bless it and ask forgiveness for disturbing it.

"I can't help but think about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and how its findings have come to light and how this might be, it's already been, kind of a bridge builder between our two cultures," Rozmahel said.

The plan is to host a community celebration and feast at the new burial site this summer to continue building bridges, pay homage to the buried girl and commemorate the area's history, he said.

"It really was a wonderful experience for me, this white guy who doesn't know much about that culture. I was glad to be part of it," Rozmahel said.

"It was and continues to be a spiritual experience."

**Direct Link:** <http://news.nationalpost.com/news/canada/skeleton-of-aboriginal-girl-buried-180-years-ago-on-alberta-farm-becomes-unlikely-bridge-builder>

## **Missing and murdered indigenous women: 5 things an inquiry should consider**

**Critics suggest how Liberals can improve process as cross-country consultations begin**

By Jody Porter, CBC News Posted: Jan 06, 2016 6:00 AM ET Last Updated: Jan 06, 2016 2:34 PM ET



Advocates and experts weigh in with advice for Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada Jody Wilson-Raybould and Minister of Indigenous and Northern Affairs Carolyn Bennett, as consultations begin on the inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls. (Adrian Wyld/Canadian Press)

The sister of an Ontario First Nations woman who was killed in 1994 says the Liberals are "rushing" families into consultations on a national public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women.

**Sonya Cywink** from Whitefish River First Nation was slain just outside of London, Ont. Her killer has never been found.

Her sister, Mag Cywink, said she feels the government is moving too quickly with its cross-country tour of pre-inquiry consultations, beginning Wednesday in Thunder Bay, Ont.

"We've been dealing with this for 30-plus years, like, what's the hurry?" Cywink said. "I don't think they're very organized. I think they're rushing through things that for us are sensitive matters. It doesn't make a lot of sense to do that."

Cywink said she's worried family members who have not yet processed their grief will find themselves exposed in front of government ministers.



Minister of Status of Women Patty Hajdu says there's room for improvement in the design phase of the national inquiry. (Martine Laberge/Radio-Canada)

"They shouldn't be forcing us into a position where, unprepared, we have to perform. I don't want to perform when I go to these things," she said. Minister of Status of Women Patty Hajdu said she is aware of the concerns being raised by family members and is working toward solving them.

"There's a saying that I used in my grassroots work: Not about us without us," Hajdu said. "From my perspective, that's something we can work on as a government."

CBC News spoke to several experts and compiled a list of five elements a national public inquiry into missing and murdered indigenous women and girls should consider:

## **1. Independence from government**

"While I'm delighted that ministers of the government are so engaged and supportive of the inquiry and the process, I am a little concerned that they would be so engaged in the pre-inquiry consultation," said Kim Stanton, the legal director of the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund, who wrote her doctoral dissertation on truth commissions and public inquiries.

"There will be many people in the indigenous community in particular who will see the Canadian government as complicit in the root causes of this tragedy [of missing and murdered indigenous women], so it's just deeply important that this inquiry be seen to be, and to actually be, an independent inquiry," she said.

## **2. Expert inquiry staff**

The leadership of the inquiry, in terms of its commissioners and staff, will be key to its success, Stanton said.

"We are looking for people who are independent, have integrity that is just unimpeachable, who are courageous, who are strong personally, because this is going to be a very difficult inquiry to conduct emotionally and otherwise," she said.

## **3. Direct consultation with First Nations**

There are plans to consult with indigenous organizations such as the Assembly of First Nations and the Native Women's Association of Canada, but Judith Sayers, a professor in the University of Victoria's law department, believes First Nations chiefs and councils should also have a say.

"Part of what I think the inquiry is asking is why are so many women going missing or getting murdered, and some of those root causes start in the First Nation community on the reserve," said Judith Sayers. "There's not enough housing, there's no daycare ... and so some of those issues need to come from the chief and council and the communities themselves."

## **4. Immediate action**

Sayers said people are hungry for action on safety concerns of indigenous women and girls and an inquiry shouldn't stand in the way of immediate change.

"As they're going through the inquiry, the commissioners should be able to make recommendations for immediate action," Sayers said. "Instead of making a report with all these recommendations that come out at the end, hopefully that will be one of the things that can happen throughout the inquiry."

## **5. Police accountability**

Many family members have specific questions for police, said Audrey Huntley, co-founder of the grassroots advocacy group No More Silence, but she worries that answers won't be delivered through the inquiry.

"The demand is for those [police] files to be made transparent, to have police at the table to share what they have or have not done on their loved ones' disappearance or murder, and I don't see that happening," Huntley said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/inquiry-missing-and-murdered-indigenous-women-1.3390803>

## Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

### Supreme Court Cases Probe Conflict Between Constitution And Native American Rights

1/01/2016 @ 10:31AM

A trio of cases before the U.S. Supreme Court, plus another one waiting in the wings involving native Hawaiians, all tackle the same question: Where do the universal human rights of indigenous people end and the specific rights of American citizens begin?

It's a tough question that has bedeviled courts and legislators since European settlers first set foot in North America, and it tends to scramble the traditional ideological positions of liberals and conservatives alike. Looming in the background is the United Nations, which has its own conventions regarding the rights of indigenous peoples that may conflict with the U.S. idea of one nation under a single Constitution.

In *U.S. v. Bryant*, for example, the court must decide whether Michael Bryant can be indicted under a federal law providing for stiffer sentences for repeat offenders in domestic-abuse cases if one of his earlier convictions came in a tribal court where he didn't have a defense lawyer. Most Americans take it for granted they will be given a lawyer if they can't afford one under the 1963 Supreme Court decision *Gideon v. Wainwright*, considered a triumph of liberal jurisprudence. But *Gideon* doesn't apply in tribal reservations — and the Obama administration finds itself arguing *against* the right to court-appointed defense counsel in Bryant's case because that would undermine the rights of Native Americans to administer tribal justice the way they see fit.

Conservatives who favor states' rights, local control and religious freedom, meanwhile, aren't so ardent when it comes to Indian tribes: In *the case of Dollar General*, they would allow the company to remove a lawsuit against it from tribal court to the perceived safety of federal court. The third case, *Nebraska v. Parker*, asks whether tribes can exert their taxing authority in territories they sold more than a century ago, essentially granting them sovereignty over land that has been occupied and ruled by non-Indians since the 1800s.



President Barack Obama presents the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Peggen Frank on behalf of her father-in-law, Native American environmental leader and treaty rights activist Billy Frank, Jr. (Photo by Alex Wong/Getty Images)

Indian tribal societies predated the settlers, of course, yet in a bit of legal legerdemain the European colonists who wrote the U.S. Constitution placed the Indians under the protection of Congress and subject to most of its laws. For most of this country's history, official government policy toward native Americans was assimilation, with an assumption the limited sovereignty Indians held within their reservations would fade away as they became farmers and their lands were absorbed into the surrounding states.

That changed in the 1960s.

"We switched from the idea of trying to take apart and dismantle Indian tribes to giving them the tools for self-determination," said Tim Purdon, a former U.S. Attorney in North Dakota who recently formed an Indian-focused litigation group at Robins Kaplan along with Brendan Johnson, the former U.S. Attorney for South Dakota. "One of the keys to self-determination is running an effective court system."

Now some Indian activists are saying "we have these human rights that predate your Constitution," Purdon said. "Are we at a tipping point for the next phase of Indian policy for the human rights era?"

The conflict between self-determination and the Constitution is at the center of *U.S. v. Bryant*, which challenges a Ninth Circuit decision reversing the indictment of a man under a federal statute that provides stiffer penalties for repeat offenders. Bryant argues, and a divided Ninth Circuit agreed, that allowing him to be indicted under the three-strikes law would violate his Sixth Amendment right to counsel under *Gideon v. Wainwright*.

Indian officials and the Obama administration disagree, even if that conflicts with the broader liberal understanding of civil rights. Under previous court decisions, *Gideon* doesn't apply to tribal courts, many of which don't provide for court-

appointed defense attorneys. And the Ninth Circuit's decision conflicts with those of two other federal circuits, meaning defendants face different rules in different parts of the country unless the Supreme Court settles the law.

The administration's support of tribal law has a strong pragmatic angle. Domestic violence is a serious problem in Indian country – the Centers for Disease Control has reported 61% of native American and Alaskan native women have been assaulted – and Congress and the Justice Dept. have poured millions of dollars into Indian police and court systems to try make them more effective.

If the Ninth Circuit's reasoning holds, tribal police will lose a powerful tool for curbing violent abusers. The problem for defendants like Bryant, of course, is they may be prosecuted under a different understanding of the Constitution than non-Indians, simply because they belong to a tribe and live on a reservation.

The Dollar General case also challenges the power of tribal courts to exert their jurisdiction over non-Indians, in this case a discount store chain that is accused of liability over a Dollar General manager's alleged attack on a Choctaw tribe member's child. The government again supports the Choctaws, saying Dollar General subjected itself to tribal justice when it agreed to operate on the reservation. But that raises the question of whether tribal courts, which can restrict juries to tribe members and sometimes allow cases to be decided by tribal elders, can violate the due process rights of non-members.

In oral arguments Chief Justice John Roberts questioned whether the Supreme Court had ever held non-members to be subject to tribal law in civil cases. Justice Anthony Kennedy asked whether it was possible companies could be held liable for millions of dollars in punitive damages in a product-liability case simply because they ship a package to a customer in Indian territory and are judged by a court there.

The third case before the court this session tackles a much narrower question: Did Congress intend to reduce the size of the Omaha Tribe reservation when it granted the tribe the right to sell 50,000 acres in 1882? The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals said no, allowing the Omahas to enforce a tax on liquor sold in stores outside the reservation's present boundaries. The state of Nebraska and concerned municipalities elsewhere have challenged the ruling, saying it could open the door for Indian tribes to reassert control over territory they long since ceded to local and state jurisdiction.

The problem is interpreting law and attitudes that have changed since the 19th century. When Congress established Indian reservations in the 1800s, it did so assuming "that the reservation system would fade over time," the Supreme Court said in a 1984 decision, *Solem v. Bartlett*. In that case the court held that only Congress could shrink the size of a reservation and it must make it clear it is doing so when it authorizes Indians to sell their land. The court endorsed a third test based on facts on the ground, a "necessary expedient," when the vast majority of the occupants of sold land were non-Indians. But it called it "an unorthodox and potentially unreliable method of statutory interpretation" and said in most cases courts should give tribes the benefit of the doubt in any ambiguity.

Nebraska say the Eighth Circuit discarded the third test entirely, threatening the rights of the 98% of residents in the affected area who are not of Indian descent and built homes and towns assuming they were under the jurisdiction of state government.

That's also a concern in *Akini v. Hawaii*, in which Justice Kennedy issued a stay on Nov. 27. In that case, plaintiff Keli'i Akina and other Hawaiians are suing to block a proposed election by the Native Hawaiian Roll Commission, an organization established by state law that identifies native Hawaiians as descendants of the people who inhabited the islands before Captain James Cook landed there in 1778. The Roll Commission is charged with establishing a list of "qualified Native Hawaiians" who can participate in a convention to "facilitate their self-governance" and address other issues including "ownership, possession, or use of lands by the Native Hawaiian people."

Both the Justice and Interior Departments supported the movement, which also claims the support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. But the plaintiffs say the state-sponsored convention would violate their constitutional rights, because voting is limited to descendants of pre-1778 residents of the Islands who have "maintained a significant cultural, social, or civic connection to the Native Hawaiian community" and support the creation of a native Hawaiian "governing entity."

Not only do those requirements violate the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment's ban on race-based voting discrimination, the plaintiffs say, but they represent unconstitutional viewpoint discrimination. Akini is a citizen of native Hawaiian descent, for example, but he refused to agree to Declaration One, which requires signers to affirm "the unrelinquished sovereignty of the Native Hawaiian people, and my intent to participate in the process of self-governance."

The Supreme Court already ruled against the race-based qualifications for trustees for the Office of Hawaiian Affairs in the 2000 decision *Rice v. Cayetano*, so it's unlikely it will rule differently should this case appear before the current court. But Justice John Paul Stevens might have expressed the liberal opinion prevalent in the Obama administration when he dissented, saying Congress and the state of Hawaii had the power to create an organization strictly to look after the interests of native Hawaiians:

Even if one were to ignore the more than two centuries of Indian law precedent and practice on which this case follows, there is simply no invidious discrimination present in this effort to see that indigenous peoples are compensated for past wrongs, and to preserve a distinct and vibrant culture that is as much a part of this Nation's heritage as any.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.forbes.com/sites/danielfisher/2016/01/01/supreme-court-cases-probe-conflict/print/>

# CHRIS HEMSWORTH, ELSA PATAKY SLAMMED FOR NATIVE AMERICAN COSTUME PARTY PIC

GLENN HADLEY DECEMBER 31, 2015

Actor Chris Hemsworth and his wife Elsa Pataky apparently offended a lot of fans on social media with a recent costume party picture.

The *Furious 7* actress posted a picture of herself, Chris, and a group of their friends dressed as Native Americans on Instagram early Thursday morning. According to the photo's caption, the star couple attended a New Year's Eve party that had a Wild Wild West theme.

Chris Hemsworth and Elsa are both located on the far left of the photo; Elsa has a duck face while Chris appears to be a little confused. The rest of the people dressed as Native Americans are smiling while placed behind a large "Wanted" sign with a marked reward of \$6,500.

It did not take very long for Chris and Elsa's followers and fans to start commenting and sharing their reactions to the photo on Instagram. The overall response was mixed.

Some felt that the photo was very disrespectful and did not hesitate to comment on how offended they were by it.

Perhaps one of the lengthiest comments made by someone offended by the photo came from Instagram user BourbonandBabyBlues.

"This is so disappointing to see. Native Americans are real, their culture is real, and they most certainly not a f\*\*\*king costume. This is akin to walking around in blackface. I'm from Oklahoma, where the majority of Native Americans were forced to settle after colonization. People don't dress up as the [indigenous] people of Australia and make a mockery of their culture. You wouldn't paint your face black, put on 'urban' clothing, and throw a f\*\*\*king party. You sure as hell shouldn't paint your face and dress...as Native Americans either."

The core of that overall reaction was essentially repeated through the comments of many other fans and followers that were just as offended by Chris Hemsworth and Elsa Pataky's photo.

**dovahk11d:** "Not cool, man... You shouldn't dress up in other people's traditional dress/a mockery of it. it might seem harmless but it's just...thoughtless and unkind and overall a sh\*\*\*ty thing to do. if it isn't yours to use, don't use it. i love you and chris but this is disappointing, gotta say."

**edithprr:** “You are gonna get a lot of sh\*t for this photo Elsa, Native Americans are sensitive about their traditional dress being made into costumes for recreational activities.”

**m.jolnir:** “Y’all couldn’t think of a different party theme?”

**b.loe:** “Oh no Thor has gone and effed up with this cultural appropriation”

**realpumpkin1:** “[Elsa Pataky], very sad to see white people lampooning traditional Native American dress.”

**roseyposeyosey:** “Why would you do something like this and think it’s alright?”

On the other hand, others simply did not see anything wrong with it at all and even slammed the harsh critics in return for taking a themed party picture so seriously in the first place.

**317537rn:** “Try to ignore the hate here. You guys are having fun and no one is hurt by it. My goodness what people get offended about on here. Happy new year to you and yours!”

**hclark19:** “My goodness – can we please just stop with everyone being offended by everything? I’m actually of Indian decent and this does not bother me at all. Please people, let people live their lives. Be happy.”

**pita33351:** “Look at all the sensitive people getting offended. Get over it. It was a theme party. I swear people these days get offended over EVERYTHING. People have nothing better to do then complain about every little thing...and I’m sure they will complain about this comment. Quit acting like a bunch of little babies.”

Chris Hemsworth and Elsa Pataky are usually not known for posting controversial pictures or wearing culturally insensitive outfits. The *Thor* actor has managed to maintain a fairly low profile in the public eye with the exception of adding film credit after film credit to his blossoming career as an actor.

In addition to being a wife and mother, Elsa has also been able to show off her own acting skills, especially within the last few *Fast and Furious* movies as Dom’s rebound love interest.

Neither Chris Hemsworth nor Elsa Pataky have issued an official response to the negative backlash associated with their controversial photo as of yet.

[Image Credit: Jamie McCarthy/Getty Images]

Read more at <http://www.inquisitr.com/2671771/chris-hemsworth-elsa-pataky-native-american-costume/#ewW0OuzQpEQ7Uu7r.99>

## **The Year in Review: 15 Big Stories Highlighting Native Education**

ICTMN Staff

1/1/16

There was a lot to talk about regarding Native education in 2015. Students fought for the right to wear eagle feathers at graduation ceremonies, Cobell scholarships became available and the Bureau of Indian Education started looking at the state of reservation schools. ICTMN spotlighted a number of these stories this year:

**WINNING EAGLE FEATHER FIGHT** A 20-year-old policy at Grand Forks Public Schools was changed, allowing Native American students to wear eagle feathers on their graduation tassels.



*A Native American group in North Dakota has won the fight for students to wear eagle feathers to graduation ceremonies. (Change.org)*

**UW FINISHES LONGHOUSE** The second longhouse in Seattle since the original ones were destroyed in the late 1800s was erected. Those involved in its construction hope it will encourage more Native Americans to pursue higher education.



Elaine Grinnell, Jamestown S'Klallam, blesses the University of Washington longhouse under construction during a blessing ceremony, Aug. 6, 2014. The longhouse will open on March 12 and is the second longhouse built in Seattle since the last longhouses were destroyed during the settlement era. (Emil Pitre/University of Washington)

**NATIVES LEARN IN CRUMBLING BUILDINGS** Thousands of American Indian children are attending school in buildings that are an [immediate threat](#) to their health and safety. Interior Secretary Sally Jewell said, “BIE schools are historically some of the lowest-performing schools in the nation. The infrastructure is crumbling and they have a severe lack of resources.”

**COBELL SCHOLARSHIPS HAPPENING** The U.S. Interior Department transferred <sup>copy</sup>7 million to the Scholarship Fund for American Indian/Alaska Native students authorized by the Cobell settlement. A total of \$60 million can be put into the fund from Buy-Back Program sales. Applications are [available now](#).

**MONTANA STEPS UP FOR NATIVE STUDENTS**The state's Office of Public Instruction [initiated efforts](#) in its K-12 classrooms specifically relevant to tribes—including the Indian Education for All program and the Schools of Promise initiative and the hiring of two full-time specialists whose job is to help teachers working on closing the achievement gap. The Montana State Legislature also supports tribal colleges by providing funding for non-tribal students attending those schools.



Elementary students at the *Graduation Matters Wolf Point* kickoff. (Courtesy Montana Office of Public Instruction)

**NATIVE HISTORY A MUST IN WASHINGTON SCHOOLS**There are 29 federally recognized indigenous nations in Washington State, and as of May 8, it became [mandatory for schools](#) in the state to educate students about the history and governance of those nations.

**NO EAGLE FEATHERS ALLOWED**[Waverly Wilson](#) was told by her principal at Lakes High School in Lakewood, Washington that she could not wear an eagle feather on her tassel at graduation. [Hayden Layne Griffith](#), who graduated from Caney Valley School District, fought a similar battle. [Christian Titman](#) was able to wear his during his graduation from Clovis Unified School District after an agreement was reached.



Waverly "Wave" Wilson is seen here holding an eagle feather that was presented to her by her Uncle Mike who adopted her into the Blackfoot Tribe (left). And on the right, she is seen in her Fancy Dance regale in Lakewood, Washington. (Courtesy Photos)

**ASU GRADUATES 10 PHDS**This year's [graduating class at ASU](#) may have included the largest group of Native American doctoral graduates to ever collect degrees at one time.

The 10 graduates are all Pueblo Indians who were a part of the first joint endeavor between ASU's School of Social Transformation and Santa Fe Indian School's Leadership Institute.

**\$50 MILLION GOES TO TCUS** The grants will help higher education institutions strengthen their academic quality, management, and overall fiscal stability.



Student volunteers at Navajo Technical University, one of the TCUs receiving award money from the U.S. Department of Education, are seen here after NTU's Empowerment Through Art & Education event in August. (Navajo Technical University/Facebook)

**AP U.S. HISTORY LIES ABOUT NATIVES** American exceptionalism is back! The College Board, having deleted the term in its 2014 revision of the AP U.S. History Curriculum Framework, [reinstated it in 2015](#).

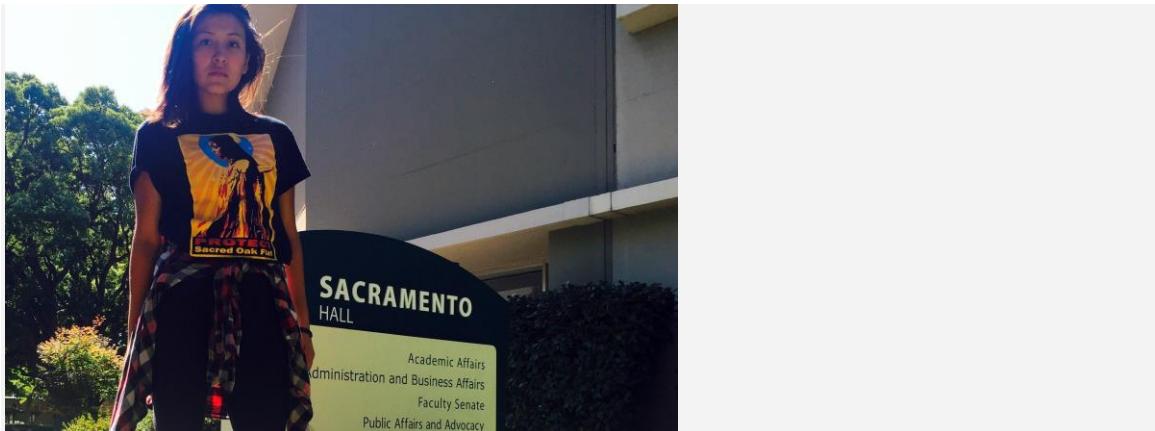
**NO MOHAWKS ALLOWED** A Native second grader at the Washington County School District in Utah was [sent home](#) because his traditional Mohawk hairstyle was “too distracting” and violated the dress code.

**SUSAN TAFFE REED REASSIGNED** After questions about her Native heritage arose, [Reed was removed](#) as the director of the Native American Program at Dartmouth.



After being named director of Dartmouth's Native American Program and coming under fire for running a 'fake tribe,' Susan Taffe Reed has been reassigned. (Dartmouth College/Eli Burakian)

**DENYING NATIVE GENOCIDE** A Cal State Sacramento University professor who allegedly [told his U.S. History](#) class he did not like the term “genocide” in relation to Native Americans, told a Native student who disagreed with him that she was disenrolled from his course.



*Chiitaanibah Johnson, (Navajo/Maidu) a 19-year-old sophomore student at Cal State Sacramento University says when she told her U.S. History professor that she disagreed with his assessment that Native Americans did not face genocide—the professor said she was hijacking his class, was accusing him of bigotry and racism, and she was expelled from the class. (Courtesy Chiitaanibah Johnson)*

**FIGHTING RACISM AT YALE** Native students at [Yale joined](#) more than 1,000 people to make their voices heard in an event on November 9 where students of color and their allies showed unity in the face of racial problems on campus.



*Yale University students and supporters participate in a march across campus to demonstrate against what they see as racial insensitivity at the Ivy League school in New Haven, Connecticut on November 9, 2015. (Ryan Flynn/AP)*

**CONGRESS PASSES EDUCATION DO-OVER** [Congress passed](#) the Every Student Succeeds Act, the first major federal overhaul of elementary and secondary education in 15 years. The president signed the act on December 10, quashing most provisions of No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

*Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/01/year-review-15-big-stories-highlighting-native-education-162905>*

# Actress-Director Irene Bedard Talks About Her Songs and Two Old Women

Jason Morgan Edwards

1/1/16

To call Irene Bedard busy would be a laughable understatement. The multi-talented actress, director and producer best-known from her roles on A&E's *Longmire* or the mockumentary *Ron and Laura Take Back America* or as narrator of *A Thousand Voices* spoke with ICTMN about two of her recent projects, *Songs My Brothers Taught Me* and *Two Old Women*, which have been creating industry buzz.

*Songs My Brothers Taught Me* was first introduced at last year's Sundance Film Festival in Utah, then traveled to the Cannes Film Festival in France. The film, in which Bedard is Co-executive producer and portrays the role of Lis Winters is, according to Bedard, the story of a young boy and girl from the Pine Ridge Reservation and the struggles that they face.

"The entirety of the film is meant to help people understand why someone wouldn't leave the Rez. A lot of people have asked me, 'Well, if it's so hard to find jobs, why don't you just leave?' The film answers that question."

Conceived by Chloé Zhao, the film was four years in the making, during which time the Chinese-born writer and director lived on the Rez. "As I became friends with some of the Lakota people living there, I became increasingly intrigued and almost envious of the deep connection they have to their homes, families, communities and their land," said Zhao.

"This bone-deep attachment also has its consequences, and over time I also became aware of the various struggles and isolation they face because of it. In many ways I made *Songs* to explore this question – How do you leave the only place you've ever known?"

Bedard will be directing *Two Old Women*, a film based on a best-selling book by Velma Wallis ([Gwich'in](#) Athabascan). Thomas Denomme, Bedard's partner at Sleeping Lady Films, Waking Giants Productions, had discussed the book, loved the story and decided to make an offer to the author to produce the film. "As an Alaskan Native, it's just one of our great stories," says Bedard.

"It's a true story that has been passed on from generation to generation, of two old women, during a very harsh winter, who were abandoned because they weren't able to keep up with the entire village as it migrated. It's a story of survival and perseverance, and the [Gwich'in](#) Athabascan have continued to do that."

"We are going to film in an Indigenous language in an Indigenous territory," says Bedard. "We want to preserve our languages and this is one way to promote that. The loss of language and culture and assimilation, that very much leads to the conditions in which people live."

"I think that there's so much left untold as to American Indian people and culture and tradition, history and our positive stories, our good news in Indian Country. There are so many stories out there that I think are more than entertainment. If you're doing good storytelling, you're always going to inform someone about a different point of view."

And, this point of view, a Native American/Alaskan Native/ American

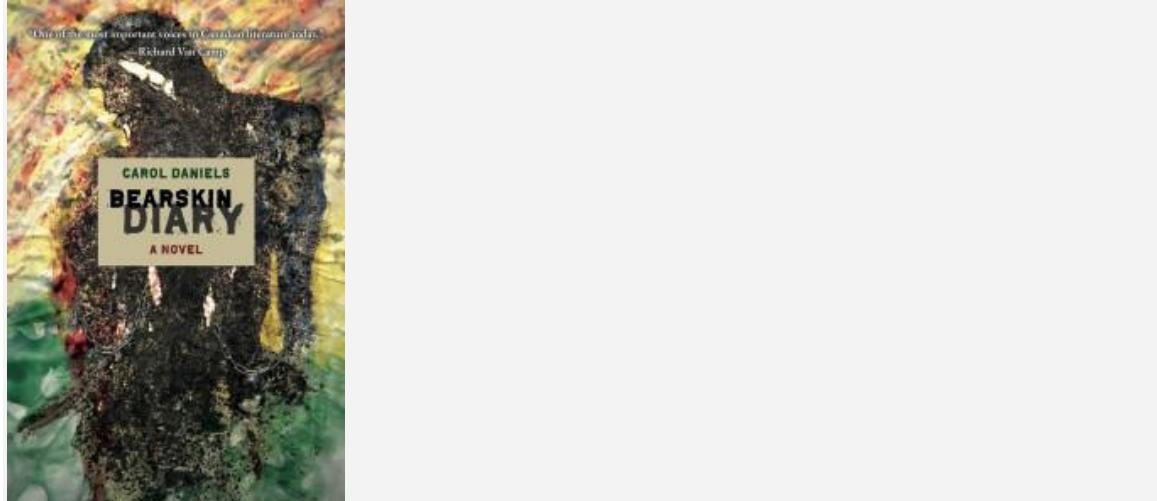
Indian/Indigenous point of view, has not had as many opportunities as other points of view."

[Songs My Brother Taught Me](#) with John Reddy (Lakota) and Jashaun St. John (Lakota) in the lead roles has been showing at various film festivals around the country. [Two Old Women](#) is currently in pre-production.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/01/actress-director-irene-bedard-talks-about-her-songs-and-two-old-women-162931>

## **Bearskin Diary – Surviving Canada's shameful '60s Scoop**

Posted by [Common Ground](#) in [Columns](#), [Creativity](#), [January 2016](#), [Read It, Spirit](#) /



The author's cover artwork is a 5X4 foot painting of an Elder's story – running to hide from Indian Agents – made from dirt, acrylics and other materials

- The wise Cherokee proverb, “Never criticize a person until you’ve walked a mile in their moccasins,” encapsulates the idea that it’s impossible to internalize another person’s point of view without climbing into their skin and walking around in their world. Too often, non-Aboriginals lack even the basic knowledge of the lives of indigenous people. For example, how many of us could comprehend why a four-year-old child would attempt to scrub colour from their skin, scouring and bleeding profusely? Carol Daniels’ just-published first novel, *Bearskin Diary* (Nightwood), offers much insight and I winced at the unprecedented glimpses into the raw, painful reality of Canada’s First Nations. Daniels was the first aboriginal anchor in national news – *CBC Newsworld* (1989). In her 30-year, far-flung, cross-country journalism career, she studied law at the University of New Brunswick, became the first female Aboriginal Lay Bencher in Manitoba and ran provincially in Saskatchewan (NDP, 2011), unsuccessfully. Now, an award-winning multidisciplinary artist, actress and member of the Cree Nation, she was a victim of the little known “60’s Scoop,” when 20,000 plus Canadian babies were torn from their mother’s arms, up into the 1980s.

Fostered and adopted, the only native in a white community, Daniels, like many “Scoop Kids” tried to erase her colour. I called her Regina home the day after the new federal government announced an inquiry into missing and murdered Aboriginal women.

“I’m so happy, for myself and the families that may find some peace. I could have been among the victims. Now we might finally learn what happened and why it is happening. As well, as an unwed aboriginal woman, I would have been destroyed to leave a hospital without my three children.

“This is an exciting time in Canada, as First Nations, Metis and Inuit gain traction on what I call the ‘Red Road.’ The Truth and Reconciliation report is finished, with some recommendations being implemented. And we have an historic number of Aboriginal MP’s, including Justice Minister Jody Wilson-Raybould.



Carol Daniels

“Many Canadians don’t know about the Scoop, nobody spoke about it. Kids who went through it constantly felt alienated, isolated, ostracized, asking, “Where do I go?” Nobody listened or understood. We were just numbers, thousands of little brown babies, like stray dogs. They wanted to get us early, to assimilate us faster, rather than wait a few years as with residential school victims. Took us away, sometimes as slave labour, or didn’t have anything to do with us – didn’t know where to put us. I hope to add to new dialogue and to tell victims they aren’t alone; there is hope and help.

“Some things in *Bearskin Diary*, people won’t like: sexuality and really ugly behaviour, dark, in-your-face scenes. It’s a frank look at racism, at what First Nations have to go through. I wanted to put it out there and don’t care if it’s not polite.”

In her experience, most media aren’t up to reporting Aboriginal issues.

“They don’t know a damn thing about us. Where’s the perspective if you have no idea what’s going on, or what has gone on? I’ve heard it all in story meetings and press bars. ‘Who gives a shit what an Indian thinks.’ ‘No one wants to see one on TV’ and ‘You work here, but will never be one of us.’ There’s a handful of reporters from our fastest rising demographic. Being representative of the population is good business for God-sake and the CBC has been a godsend, a necessity, not a utility, a last bastion.”

*Bearskin Diary* tells the story of Sandy – named for soil – scooped, then adopted by a Ukrainian family. She struggles with relentless bullying and racism from schoolmates, strangers, co-workers and her own lack of understanding of her heritage. Daniels had enough journalism and opted for fiction. But she writes what she knows, reflecting her own experience, stories and characters, culled from assignments, in crisp, conversational news style. There are heart-breaking moments, including childhood mimicking

of *National Geographic* magazine, the only window to a non-white world. Heart pounding, dangerous investigative reporting of the secret Saskatoon police “Starlight Tours” is eerily similar to police officers in Val D’or, Quebec, and elsewhere, questioned for driving Indigenous women to city outskirts, sexually assaulting them then leaving them to walk to safety.

*Bearskin Diary* is reaching an audience beyond what anyone imagined. Daniels notes, “It started as a play while I was working in Yellowknife, after a close friend’s death in 2009 before he got to his wish list. It grew in the long, cold nights over eight years. I got so many rejection letters; I couldn’t even talk when I was told it would be published. It’s been translated into 10 languages, released worldwide.

“In my lifetime, the Pass System – modelled after South Africa’s Apartheid – has ended. We can leave a reservation without permission. And we are voting, in large numbers, something we never did – or were allowed to do – before. I ran for office as encouragement. Vote out those who hate us then we won’t have to protest as much, after the fact. Just get them out. Support people committed to moving forward with real change.

“Our culture is important to everyone. We all want the same thing for our kids, strong communities and opportunities, healthy food, basic education. Indigenous people are beautiful, strong and knowledgeable, just the way they are, friends and neighbours. Give us the tools to break stereotypes. Maybe, a simplistic start, but a good one, nevertheless. “We need talk more – get to know each other, share food and conversation. In certain situations, I walk in and immediately identify racism. It’s like an energy you can feel. Then I start doing my thing and we come together in song and joy. It all boils down to love and understanding.”

Daniels (nee Morin) gives new voice to silenced First Nations women, truth to power and an essential, integral perspective that will resonate with all walks. Her birth mother is deceased, but she reunited with her biological family. All ties were cut with her adoptive family in 2012, when she married Lyle Daniels in a traditional ceremony. After attending her first pow-wow and picking up a drum and the Cree language, she asked, “Why haven’t I been doing this all of my life?”

This article appeared in the JANUARY 2016 print edition © Common Ground magazine.

**Direct Link:** <http://commonground.ca/2016/01/bearskin-diary-surviving-canadas-shameful-60s-scoop/>

## **Uprooted by war, Colombian indigenous people doubt peace**

**Alba TOBELLAAFP**

December 31, 2015



Ariel, a traditional Embera indigenous doctor, remains at a shelter for displaced Embera people in Bogota, Colombia (AFP Photo/Guillermo Legaria)

Bogota (AFP) - When Delfina Wazorna thinks back on the home she left behind, she remembers machine guns, armed men and death threats.

It makes the Embera indigenous woman skeptical of the peace deal that Colombia's government and its main rebel group, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), have vowed to sign in the first three months of the new year.

"There will never be peace," said Wazorna, 54, who fled her ancestral lands eight years ago with her family after they found their house surrounded with explosives.

They drifted from city to city before finally landing at a shelter in the capital Bogota set up to accommodate members of her indigenous community uprooted by the half-century conflict.

"It's all lies. These people don't forgive. The guerrillas told me, 'You can hide for 30 years, but if you come back you'll die,'" a traditional healer named Ariel told AFP at the same shelter.

Ariel, who declined to give his last name, also fled in 2004 after someone put a machete into the wall of his house with a death threat hanging from the blade.

The Embera, whose lands lie mainly in the tropical forests of the Choco and Risaralda departments of western Colombia, have been trapped in the crossfire of Colombia's messy, many-sided war.

The conflict, which has killed more than 220,000 people and displaced six million, has drawn in several leftist rebel groups, right-wing paramilitaries and drug traffickers since the Marxist FARC was launched in 1964.

The Embera say they have been terrorized by the FARC, the National Liberation Army (ELN), a rival rebel movement that has yet to join the peace process, and other armed groups.

More than 1,000 Embera have fled to Bogota over the years, where they get by however they can -- often by begging.

Many try to return after a period of urban exile. But their homecoming is complicated by lingering violence and a lack of infrastructure.

"There are still risks in Embera territory," said Julia Madariaga, who runs the ethnic affairs unit at the government agency set up to help victims of the conflict.

- From jungle to street -

Since the shelter in Bogota was created in 2011, it has hosted 1,098 Embera. Of those, just 87 remain today.

But not all have managed to return home. Authorities say there are currently 370 Embera holed up in cheap hotels in the capital, paying \$2 to \$7 a night.

"I could say I'm going home, but where?" said Norbey Giraldo, 23, who tried to go back to Risaralda with a group of 112 families four years ago, but ended up back in Bogota.

The influx was too large for the indigenous reservation, and the government resettled some of the families elsewhere.

Giraldo, who first arrived in Bogota as a boy about 12 years ago and left as a married man with three kids, said he was taken to a plot of land with no house whose previous owner had left after his two children were killed.

"We received threats by armed men from I don't know which group. They told us, 'Get out of here. This isn't your land,'" Giraldo said.

"They gave us until December 15 to leave."

He and his family didn't wait around until then.

"The homecomings have been awful," said Alberto Wazorna, an Embera who sits on Colombia's National Indigenous Organization. He said there was not enough health, education and housing infrastructure in place for returnees.

Unable to go home because of lingering guerrilla activity, Lisandro Nacavera, a 50-year-old Embera who fled 16 years ago, is working on setting up a new reservation on private land.

He said it saddens him to see the way his people live in the city.

"They've gotten used to begging instead of farming their land," he said.

"An Embera without land isn't an Embera."

**Direct Link:** <http://news.yahoo.com/uprooted-war-colombian-indigenous-people-doubt-peace-034711757.html>

## **Host Nations and American Indian Studies: Respecting Indigenous Peoples**

Duane Champagne

1/2/16

One of the rules observed by indigenous nations is that land is mutually recognized and respected. When indigenous people travel to visit with other indigenous nations, they respect the culture, government, and land. Comments of appreciation and recognition of the land are often given in speeches. Attachment to specific territories are embedded in history, creation stories and culture. The land plays a significant role in the identity of Indigenous Peoples.

From time immemorial, specific homelands determined the location of indigenous rights. Even when land was sold or taken away by other groups or nation states, Indigenous Peoples continued to honor their original lands. They often carry out ceremonies and make visits in memory and respect for their original territories.

In the contemporary world, many indigenous individuals migrate for work, and often cross nation state boundaries. National boundaries are not arbitrary for Indigenous Peoples. Indigenous rights and land are closely interrelated. Indigenous Peoples from Mexico may migrate to the United States in search of employment, and while in the United States they carry on their indigenous cultures and ceremonies. Nevertheless, the homelands of Indigenous Mexican Peoples and their indigenous rights to land and self-government remain in Mexico. Indigenous Mexican people should honor and respect the land of the Indigenous Peoples of the United States. Both U.S. and Mexican Indigenous Peoples can and should seek common cause for indigenous rights, but they are defending indigenous rights attached to different homelands.

Similar issues arise in the formation of Indigenous Studies Departments or programs. American Indian Studies refers to Indians in the United States. The field of American Indian Studies, unlike Asia-American Studies, Black Studies, and Chicano Studies, has not widely developed into an academic discipline.

Elizabeth Cook-Lynn in 1997 wrote an article “Who Stole American Indian Studies?” where she describes how American Indian Studies was dominated by colonial theories and goals, while indigenous scholarship was discredited. Current efforts to create American Indian Studies or Indigenous Studies departments continue to fail for lack of institutional support. Furthermore, Indigenous Studies remains dominated by ethnic studies theories, while indigenous theory focused on defending indigenous rights and issues, is discouraged. The movement toward a broader, international Indigenous Studies

is plagued by theories of ethnicity that do not focus on indigenous perspectives or arguments.

Efforts to move toward Indigenous Studies should respect the fundamental principals of indigenous identity. The Indigenous Peoples of each national region should be respected. Indigenous policies within the United States, or Mexico, or Canada, take on different patterns because of differing patterns of nation state policies, differing colonial histories, and differing indigenous nations. The predominance of an indigenous identity without reference to locality, land, specific culture, is a homogenization of the diversity of Indigenous Peoples everywhere.

Indigenous Studies is its own field of study, but should embody respect for the diversity of Indigenous Peoples at the local, national, and international levels. Thus American Indian Studies should remain as a study of the Indigenous Peoples of the United States. Just as there should be Mexican Indigenous Studies or Canadian Indigenous Studies. The same for the Indigenous Peoples of other nations, they each form a pattern of study based on diverse cultures that are engaged in specific nation-state and colonial experiences.

Other Indigenous Peoples should be invited to study at the international level, but at the same time should respect and honor the host Indigenous Peoples of the nation, and locality. Indigenous Studies should not divide the world in ways that do not respect the local and national territories of host Indigenous Peoples. Immigrant Indigenous Peoples should respect the land and governments of host Indigenous Peoples. At the same time, host Indigenous nations should recognize and respect the cultures of immigrant Indigenous Peoples. Academic departments need to respect the local, national, and international levels of the indigenous movement. Otherwise, Indigenous Studies will remain lost and stolen from the cultures and values of indigenous nations everywhere.

*Read more at*<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/02/host-nations-and-american-indian-studies-respecting-indigenous-peoples-162792>

## **Native Americans find ways to sustain their heritage in Missouri**

SEAN MCNEALY, Jan 3, 2016



Mashu White Feather of the Cherokee Tribe sits on his bed Dec. 16 in the house he grew up in. White Feather is a retired health professional who moved back to Columbia two years ago to take care of his mother when she became ill. Since his return, he has made attempts to find other Native Americans in the area and recently helped coordinate a celebration of the Cherokee New Year.

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COLUMBIA — Mashu White Feather's daily attire proclaims his pride in his heritage.

A silver ring dangles from his nose, signifying that White Feather is a warrior — a Vietnam veteran in his case. The piercings in each of his ears represent the four cardinal geographic directions — a recurring theme in Native tradition.

His shaved head, ribbon shirts and chokers are also how he visibly presents himself as a member of the Cherokee tribe.

For White Feather and others who identify with their Native heritage, living in urban areas and being disconnected from their ancestral homeland give them few opportunities to express their heritage and pride.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2014 estimate, 607,140 people live within the 18-county central Missouri area, and 2,593 of them — approximately 0.43 percent — identify as Native Americans.

While White Feather is not a federally recognized member of the Cherokee tribe, he fully embraces his roots.

“I don’t need a card to tell me who I am,” White Feather said. “I don’t need a non-Native to tell me who I am. Nobody can take my heritage away from me.”

## Cherokee in Columbia

Mashu White Feather was born and raised in Columbia. Although he most clearly identifies with his Cherokee ancestry, he is also of Osage descent through his father's family.

He learned about his Native heritage from his maternal grandparents, both Cherokee, who taught him their history and background.

"We have to know our history, where we're coming from and deal with today in order to make better plans for the future," White Feather said. "We don't want to forget the past either because that's where the lessons are learned."

As a teen, he says, he had a difficult time identifying with the dominant white culture, so he would hang around the foreign students at MU whose values were similar to his.

"I think one of the things good about Columbia is the university because we have such a diversity that comes through," he said. "Columbia is much more of an open-minded community because of that."

After serving in the military and living in Illinois and Wisconsin for a number of years, White Feather moved to Alabama in 2008 where three sisters live. He said he went for a visit and was invited back to become a part of the Cherokee community there.

About two years ago, White Feather returned to Columbia to take care of his mother. Since his return, he has made attempts to find other Natives in the area.

A handful of Cherokee live around the Columbia area, so to bring them together, he helped coordinate a celebration of the Cherokee New Year last fall in Bunceton, Missouri.

"It was awesome," White Feather said. "Everyone came together and worked together really well and made connections."

## **Complicated history**

Before the American Revolution, hundreds of thousands of Native Americans inhabited the country. Then, beginning in the early 19th century, ethnic cleansing and epidemics ultimately claimed almost three-quarters of the population.

Throughout their history, Native-American tribes were always on the move because of warfare with enemy tribes or shifting sources of food. The migrations made it difficult for the government and historians to determine which tribes settled in Missouri, but Osage, Missouria, Illini, Chickasaw, and others, have called Missouri home at one point, according to Duane Meyer, author of "The Heritage of Missouri."

Today, 565 groups (bands and tribes) in the United States are recognized as Native American by the government as eligible for federal claims, rights and benefits. Unlike neighboring states, however, Missouri has no recognized groups. To the west, Kansas has four, and Oklahoma, a state once recognized as Indian Territory, has 38.

According to Meyer, the tribes once found in Missouri first met Europeans in 1673 when the French explorers Louis Joliet and Jacques Marquette crossed territory that encompassed present-day Illinois, Missouri, Iowa and Indiana.

Brief trading occurred between the Natives and the Europeans, but interactions with the European explorers were not always healthy. The Missouria were almost eliminated through a deadly combination of attacks from the Sac and Fox tribes and the European-introduced disease, smallpox, according to the Missouri Department of Tourism.

In August 1804, explorers Meriwether Lewis and William Clark encountered members of the Missouria tribe. Missouria and Oto — a southern Sioux tribe — Indians had villages on the Platte River near present-day Council Bluffs, Iowa, and Lewis and Clark arranged a meeting with their tribal leaders to promote peace and trade.

Several decades later, the Cherokee entered the state of Missouri, but not of their own accord. The Cherokee, in addition to members of several other Native tribes, were driven from their homelands in the southeastern U.S. to relocate on land west of the Mississippi River that would accommodate European expansion.

The Trail of Tears, as this westward journey is known today, cut through the southern portion of Missouri, through Cape Girardeau and Springfield. Some of the Natives en route to the West were able to escape from the trail and remained in the state. In order to avoid further deportation, some hid their identities.

From the mid-19th century to the beginning of the 20th, Missouri tried to keep Natives out of the state. The 13th Missouri General Assembly passed a law in 1845 banning Native Americans and encouraged other border states to do the same. Missouri's law was repealed in 1909.

These efforts to ban Native Americans or force them to assimilate helped fuel the desire to seek community and preserve their traditions.

## **Pomp and regalia**

On a Saturday afternoon in November, several dozen spectators and participants gathered at the first annual Trading Moon Pow Wow at the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg.

Drumbeats thundered through the open gymnasium, while dancers in colorful regalia swayed and moved to the tempo of the drums. Vendors lined the gymnasium walls, selling Native-style crafts and snacks. Artists showcased work that expressed their Native pride.

At one point, assembled war veterans, Native or not, were invited to lead a grand entry promenade in honor of their service to the country. The longstanding tradition of honoring veterans stems from the reverence of warriors in many Native cultures.

Following the grand entry, men and women, young and old, joined together to dance around the inner circle of drummers who sang and chanted in their language as the dancers moved to the spirit of the music.

This sharing of dances, songs, crafts and food is one way Native people in Missouri are working to remain visible.

Growing up in St. Louis, Ed Smith, who is of Osage descent, said he once attended five or six gatherings a year. It was when Native American centers had a strong presence in urban areas.

Nowadays, Smith said there might be one gathering in the St. Louis metro area annually, so he searches for others to attend every year. At the event in Warrensburg, he was the master of ceremonies. He provided a communication link between spectators, dancers and staff, in addition to explaining the activities taking place.

“We don’t get a lot of opportunities to show our cultures,” Smith said. “We don’t see each other often, but we get together, talk and celebrate life.”

Native Americans are often romanticized and placed in the past, but Smith says the traditions and cultures are always evolving. Gatherings like the one in Warrensburg bring together new and old to create an environment that embraces change, even when individuals and different tribes identify in their own ways, he said.

A significant number of Native Americans are removed from their cultures, either from intermarriage or absence from tribal lands for so long, Smith said. This can cause a lack of appreciation for the history and culture.

“Some are removed from the cultures, some may feel out of place,” he said. “Some jump on board with the city and suburban way of life.”

Smith now lives in Overland Park, Kansas, and has access to more Native American resources than he had in St. Louis. He said the proximity to Lawrence,

Kansas, where Haskell Indian Nations University is located, shows how prominent the Native population is farther west.

In addition to the university, Kansas City has established an Indian center to keep the community of Native Americans connected to one another and their culture.

“We like to learn from each other,” Smith said.

### **Fostering community**

The hub of Native American life in the area is just north of Old Westport in Kansas City where the Kansas City Indian Center provides services to help Native Americans in the city.

Nancy Blue, who served as a member of the board and as interim director, said such centers were developed after World War II in order to assist Natives who had moved to urban areas.

Before the center in Kansas City opened in 1971, Blue and her husband helped by collecting food, fostering children and offering Native families a place to stay.

“You think of yourself as one big family,” Blue said. “I learned real quick how to stretch (food) a long way.”

Blue is not of Native American descent, but she affiliates with the Choctaw tribe because her husband was a member.

Through a series of grants, Blue and others founded the Kansas City Indian Center. Today, though less funding is available, she said the center continues to provide support and education for members of the community.

“We have maintained it to provide education to our children,” Blue said. “Everybody puts in what they can to help. You want everyone to get together, share ideas and teach one another.”

The preservation of tradition and culture is an important aspect of the center. Native crafts are taught to children, and Native ceremonies and events are held routinely.

There have been efforts to establish centers in St. Louis, but Blue said financial limits have prevented any longstanding projects.

It can be difficult in Missouri to obtain funding because Native Americans tend to be left out of government budgets, but the center in Kansas City continues to provide social services, food assistance and religious services.

“They do a lot of good,” Blue said. “They touch a lot of people.”

## Intertribal worship

Every Sunday afternoon, a Kansas City-based fellowship of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference holds worship services at the Kansas City Indian Center. The Methodist-affiliated conference has been active for more than 170 years.

The relationship between Christianity and Native people has long been rocky. European missionaries rejected Native faiths and converted indigenous people to Christianity, often against their will. In recent years, groups such as the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference have worked to bridge the gap between indigenous traditions and Christianity.

“We don’t believe you have to get rid of the tradition,” said Suzanne Gray, a member of the fellowship. “That being said, we are Christians, but we remember our ancestors, and we honor our culture and our tribe by not forgetting.”

Gray is a member of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma and attends services in Kansas City with her husband, Joe, who also identifies as Cherokee. Gray said Native Americans believed in one God before Christianity moved into the Americas.

Gathered around a rectangular table at the Kansas City Indian Center one Sunday, the Grays and another half-dozen worshipers sang from a turquoise hymnal that included songs from tribes across the continent.

At the service, those gathered sang Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek and Kiowa, as well as English, versions of hymns, such as “Amazing Grace” and the Cherokee “Guide Me, Jehovah.”

There is so much diversity in the worship service, she said, that the congregation introduces these intertribal songs into the service if a member of a certain tribe is present. Even then, the congregation must get permission from the tribe to include it.

Most of the worshipers have lost fluency in their native tongue, Gray said, but they make the effort to sing in the language of their ancestors anyway.

“We endeavor to keep those songs alive that our grandparents and great grandparents sang,” she said. “That’s what we’re doing when we sing these songs.”

**Direct Link:** [http://www.columbiamissourian.com/news/local/native-americans-find-ways-to-sustain-their-heritage-in-missouri/article\\_352fa2ea-ac07-11e5-bc87-d789f2f120ee.html](http://www.columbiamissourian.com/news/local/native-americans-find-ways-to-sustain-their-heritage-in-missouri/article_352fa2ea-ac07-11e5-bc87-d789f2f120ee.html)

## **Native Americans survived the dangers of life except smallpox**

Indians named the disease 'Running Face Sickness'



MORTAL SICKNESS AMONG THE INDIANS.  
YAHOO IMAGES

### **Smallpox epidemic**

Indigenous people around the world had no natural immunity against smallpox.

Posted: Sunday, January 3, 2016 12:00 am

Native Americans for thousands of years survived the dangers of life in the wilderness — inter-tribal warfare, wild animals, extreme weather, starvation, and the white man. But just as deadly were white man diseases — especially smallpox, against which they had no natural immunity.

In the West, from 1780 through 1782, smallpox (Variola Major) took the lives of up to half the Shoshones, also decimating the Blackfeet, Sioux, Cheyenne, Mandan, Assiniboine and others. Tribes along the Pacific Coast from Alaska to California were also hard hit. So many tribes were reduced in size because of the disease, they were unable to effectively stop the invasion of whites into their ancestral lands.

In 1862, smallpox disaster struck again along the Pacific Coast affecting both Indians and whites. The dreaded smallpox was carried by an infected passenger aboard the steamer "Brother Jonathan" sailing between San Francisco and Victoria, B.C.

As early as 1000 A.D., the Chinese are known to have inoculated against the disease by scratching the skin and applying powder made from smallpox contamination.

The first great American smallpox epidemic appeared in 1519 in Hispaniola, when up to 80 percent of the slaves brought from Africa were wiped out. Then Cortez arrived in Mexico with his men bringing more European diseases — smallpox being the deadliest. Soon, the Aztecs lost 75 percent of their 25 million population.

When the Pilgrims arrived in Plymouth in 1620, there were already white man diseases, with only 300 Indians left in Massachusetts out of 30,000. It is believed that smallpox was the culprit — having arrived from Canada or the Caribbean.

More than 175 years later, British physician and scientist Edward Jenner (1749-1832) from Gloucestershire, England, is said to have developed the first smallpox vaccine in the Western world and is sometimes called the “Father of Immunology,” though not everyone agrees he deserves that accolade.

In 1796, he successfully inoculated 8-year-old James Phipps, whom he re-vaccinated 20 times, but the boy died at age 20. The same fate befell Jenner's own son, who died at 21. Jenner's smallpox “vaccine” was brought to North America in 1798 by his boyhood friend Dr. John Clinch. It seemed to work and in 1832 by the U.S. Congress budgeted \$1,200 to help the Indians battle smallpox. However, a year later they had spent only \$721. Was the U.S. government deliberately committing genocide against the Indians? President Jefferson wrote: “The Indian of North America was as ardent as the white man, free, brave, preferring death to surrender, moral and responsible without compulsion of government, loving to his children, caring and loyal to family and friends, and equal to whites in vivacity and activity of mind.”

Historians are still debating the genocide question however. Though it's unlikely that it was an instrument of U.S. policy, there is an argument to be made about the authority for the U.S. Army frequently killing Native American non-combatants.

Also, was it genocide when the Army caused suffering and death, forcibly moving Indians from their ancestral lands to distant reservations? A prime example was the “Trail of Tears,” when between 1830 and 1850, the Army forced Chickasaw, Choctaw, Muscogee, Creek, Seminole and Cherokee from their homelands in the Southeastern United States to the Oklahoma area — with from 2,000 to 8,000 dying along the way from starvation, freezing weather and disease — especially cholera.

In the Pacific Northwest, the first contact between Europeans and the Indians is recorded as 1774, but some 30 years later, Lewis and Clark reported smallpox among both the Upper Chinookans and Chinook proper tribes in today's state of Washington.

On March 4, 1806, William Clark wrote in his journal: “Near the Sandy River an old man who appeared of Some note among them and father to my guide brought forward a woman who was badly marked with the Small Pox and made Signs that they all died with the disorder which marked her face, and which She was verry near dieing with when a Girl, from the age of this woman this Distructive disorder I judge must have been about 28 or 30 years past [1776-78], and about the time the Clatsops inform us that this disorder raged in their towns and destroyed their nation.”

By the time John Jacob Astor had set up his fur trading post in 1811 at Astoria on the Oregon coast, local Indians were already deathly afraid of smallpox. That knowledge would save the lives of Astor's men after Indians attacked his ship Tonquin and butchered its crew. One survivor named Lewis hid in the magazine room and waited for the ship to load up with Indians. Then he blew everything and everyone up — including himself.

The Indians plotted revenge. Learning of this, Duncan McDougall, who was in charge of Fort Astoria called the local Indian chiefs together for a conference. In his book Astoria, author Washington Irving tells the story:

“The white men among you,” said (McDougall), “are few in number, it is true, but they are mighty in medicine. See here, continued he, drawing forth a small bottle, safely corked up; I have but to draw the cork, and let loose the pestilence, to sweep man, woman, and child from the face of the earth. The chiefs were struck with horror and alarm.”

The threat was over and the Indians thereafter called McDougall “the Great Smallpox Chief.”

Early missionaries and other Euro-Americans reported oral traditions heard from Indians as far north as Sitka, Alaska that many died due to a major outbreak of smallpox believed to have occurred in the mid-1770s. Elderly Indians telling the stories had tell-tale pockmarks.

Supporting this story was a letter dated Feb. 6, 1840 by Asa Smith, a Congregational missionary among the Nez Perce at Kamiah Mission who wrote:

“Some very old people, I should think 70 or 80 years old and perhaps more, relate that when they were children a large number of people both of the Nez Perce and Flatheads wintered in the buffalo country. In the spring as usual the people from this region went to buffalo. Instead of finding their people as they expected, they found their lodges standing in order, and the people almost to an individual dead. Only here and there one survived the disease. It seems to have been the most virulent form of the small pox.”

A similar story was told by Jesuit missionary Gregory Mengarini in 1847 about the Flathead and Kootenai Indians in northern Idaho and surrounding area. Trappers and traders of North West Company and the Hudson's Bay Company in the early 1800s also believed that smallpox spread to the Plateau region and the West Coast from the Great Plains—agreeing with oral traditions handed down from Nez Perce, Flathead and Kootenai.

North West employee Ross Cox gives a chilling report:

“About thirty years before this period (1811) the small-pox had committed dreadful ravages among these Indians, the vestiges of which were still visible on the countenances of the elderly men and women.

“It is believed in the north-west that this disease was willfully introduced by the American traders among the Indians of the Missouri, as a short and easy method of reducing their numbers, and thereby destroying in a great measure their hostility to the whites.

“The Americans throw the blame on the French; while they in turn deny the foul imputation, and broadly charge the Spaniards as the original delinquents.”

“Be this as it may, the disease first proceeded from the banks of the Missouri . . . traveled with destructive rapidity as far north as Athabasca . . . and having fastened its deadly venom on the Snake Indians, spread its devastating course to the northward and westward . . . The unfortunate Indians, when in the height of the fever, would plunge into a river, which generally caused instant death; and thousands of the miserable wretches by suicide anticipated its fatal termination.”

Since ancient times, smallpox has taken its toll — but not anymore.

The disfiguring and deadly disease was eradicated following a hugely successful worldwide inoculation program implemented in the 1970s. The last smallpox case in history was in Somalia in 1977, and today only a few laboratory specimens remain in existence in Russia and the United States.

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### **What is smallpox?**

“Smallpox is an acute infectious disease, spread by contact with infected individuals. The usual mode of transmission is by “droplet infection” (that is, through sneezing), though touching an infected individual or fresh corpse is also effective.

“There is a remote possibility of acquiring the disease through contact with virus-laden items of clothing, personal possessions, etc. The duration of smallpox in an individual is short, lasting only a month from infection to death or recovery.

“The first two weeks constitute an asymptomatic incubation period, followed by a second two weeks when lesions are present and the carrier is infectious. Individuals who survive an attack of smallpox are usually left with visible scars (pockmarks), and acquire a life-long immunity to later attacks of the disease.”

---Robert Boyd, "Smallpox in the Pacific Northwest"

### **Early smallpox treatment...**

Inoculation against this dreaded disease was practiced in China, India and the Middle East long before in Europe. Britain and America followed in the 1700s. Treatment was to infect patients with a milder related type of disease—such as cowpox—by inserting some of the contaminants into the skin.

### **Famous smallpox survivors...**

Three American presidents contracted smallpox but survived: George Washington, Andrew Jackson and Abraham Lincoln. Among other famous survivors: Queen Elizabeth I, Stalin and Chief Sitting Bull.

### **What smallpox ISN'T...**

According to Ingri Cassel, director of Vaccination Liberation in Spirit Lake, ID, the following claims about smallpox are NOT true:

- Smallpox is highly contagious and could spread rapidly, killing millions
- Smallpox can be spread by casual contact with an infected person
- The death rate from smallpox is thought to be 30 percent.
- There is no treatment for smallpox
- The smallpox vaccine will protect a person from getting the disease

### **Q and A on Smallpox...**

<http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-170650/All-questions-answered-smallpox.html>

### **Army Private regrets Trail of Tears...**

“Future generations will read and condemn the act and I do hope posterity will remember that private soldiers like myself, and like the four Cherokees who were forced by General Scott to shoot an Indian Chief and his children, had to execute the orders of our superiors. We had no choice in the matter.”

---Private John G. Burnett, U.S. Army

### **The Long Walk of the Navajo...**

Similar to the Trail of Tears, the Long Walk was another Indian relocation enforced at bayonet point by the U.S. Army. The Navajos were moved from their homelands in eastern Arizona and western New Mexico to Bosque Redondo (round wood) 400 miles east. Even famed explorer Kit Carson was called in by the Army to help. He was told to order the Indians to “surrender or die.”

Following a scorched earth policy, he ordered his soldiers to destroy the Indian wheat and corn as well as cut down up to 1,200 peach trees. With the Navajos starved into submission, they were then forced into the long walk. More than 300 died on the journey. At Bosque Redondo, the Navajos were herded onto a 40-square mile reservation along with their traditional enemy, the Mescalero Apaches.

#### **British biological warfare...**

During the French and Indian War (1754-1763), two British commanders—General Jeffery Amherst and Colonel Henry Bouquet conspired to use biological warfare against the Indians after smallpox had broken out at Fort Pitt in Pennsylvania.

“Could it not be contrived to send the small pox among the disaffected tribes of Indians?” Amherst wrote in a letter to Bouquet. “We must on this occasion use every stratagem in our power to reduce them.”

Bouquet wrote back: “I will try to inoculate the Indians by means of Blankets that may fall in their hands, taking care however not to get the disease myself. As it is pity to oppose good men against them, I wish we could make use of the Spaniard’s Method, and hunt them with English Dogs.”

Shortly after presenting Indian chiefs with contaminated blankets and handkerchiefs, a smallpox epidemic erupted among Delaware and Shawnee.

**Direct Link:** [http://www.cdapress.com/columns/syd\\_albright/article\\_0c88cb5c-b047-11e5-be73-10604b9f0f84.html](http://www.cdapress.com/columns/syd_albright/article_0c88cb5c-b047-11e5-be73-10604b9f0f84.html)

## **South Africa's 'Native American' fetish is a very strange thing**



Spur Steak Ranches is a chain of Native American-themed restaurants popular in South Africa.

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — When you dine at South Africa's most popular family restaurant, you'll be joined by Soaring Eagle, Buffalo Brave and Buttercup, a grinning trio of cartoon mascots dressed in animal skins and war paint.

Here at [Spur Steak Ranches](#), a chain serving burgers, steaks and schnitzel, the theme is an unabashedly clichéd take on “Native American.” The restaurant's official logo is a chief in a feathered headdress. The décor is a jumble of teepees, tomahawks and totem poles. Yet despite the minefield of stereotypes, Spur restaurants are beloved by many South Africans.

There is a peculiar contradiction here. With its history of apartheid, South Africa is acutely sensitive to racism among its own population, and has been taking down colonial-era statues at university campuses — yet it has a blind spot when it comes to American history.

That is perhaps unsurprising: South Africa, like many other countries around the world, knows about North America's indigenous people via dated Hollywood portrayals that have remained stubbornly unchanged.

Party shops sell gaudy "Native American" masks, while a leading department store recently dressed mannequins in stylized pink headdresses to match their bras and underwear. A carved statue of a "Plains Indian" in full regalia stands guard outside a "spirituality" shop at a Johannesburg mall, where dream catchers are sold alongside tarot cards and meditation candles.



A selection of masks at a party store in Johannesburg.

Erin Conway-Smith/GlobalPost

Each restaurant under the Spur brand, which has 277 restaurants in South Africa plus another 43 internationally, is given a real or imagined tribal name such as the Golden Spear Spur, Running Brave Spur or Cherokee Spur.

South Africans for the most part see nothing wrong with this 1950s version of Native American culture.

Spur was named as "coolest place to eat out" in a recent youth survey by the South African Sunday Times. Generations of children have grown up having birthday parties at the restaurants, where they wear paper headdresses similar to the Burger King crown.

The United States has a similar problem with high school and college sports teams, which are under pressure to abandon names and mascots that reference Native Americans and Indians. It's a pro-sports problem, too: President Barack Obama has criticized the Washington, DC National Football League team for continuing to call itself the "Redskins," a slur for the land's original people.

Spur's management believes the chain is paying tribute to Native Americans and sees theirs as a respectful portrayal. But they seem unaware that the "noble savage" caricature is equally antiquated and offensive.

Pierre Van Tonder, chief executive of Spur Corporation, says that he sees his corporate mascot as "a tribe that embodies all that is noble and lives in harmony with the land and the universe."

When the first Spur restaurant opened in Cape Town in 1967, during the depths of apartheid, it had a "Western" theme, with a cowboy spur as a logo. This changed to a "proud American Indian chief" logo in the mid-1980s, Van Tonder said, to "signal" to a changing South Africa that people of all races were welcome at the restaurants.

To Van Tonder, the chief depicted on the Spur logo "represents strength, leadership, charisma and a spiritual connection to all that is positive in honorable people of the world."

"The Red Indian artifacts and tools, tomahawks, teepees and design graphics are universally admired and are all values our business ascribes to," he added.

Johnnie Jae, a member of the Otoe-Missouria and Choctaw tribes of Oklahoma, has a very different reaction to Spur's branding and decor.

"The logo is a dehumanizing caricature of Native men," she said. "It represents the colonial mindset that our imagery, identities, culture, and spirituality as Native people can be redefined, exploited, misappropriated and commercialized as they see fit."

Jae, a founding board member of the "Not Your Mascots" advocacy group, said that most concerning is the Spur kids' club, called the "Secret Tribe," which through its cartoons portrays Native Americans as being "wild and primitive" — with no connection to actual history or culture.



Soaring Eagle, Buttercup and Buffalo Brave, leaders of the Spur "Secret Tribe" kids' club.

"In essence, they are teaching kids that it is OK to objectify and reduce Native people, their culture and imagery to mere decoration and entertainment," she said.

"It is demeaning that [Van Tonder] would refer to us as 'Red Indians' and claim that Spur's use of stereotypical imagery is representative of our values. It's clear that he has no idea who we are as Native people."

There are 567 federally recognized tribes in the US, with hundreds more that are not recognized by government, each with distinct languages, traditions and identities.

Jae said that the version of Native Americans being presented to South Africans is "disheartening but not surprising." Racism toward Native people is often not recognized as being racist — making it even more important to fight stereotypes and mascots, she said.

Van Tonder said that while he does receive a bit of criticism, the vast majority of South Africans love the brand.

"The American Indian culture is used as a guiding principle within our organization to guide excellence in employee behavior," he said. "We have a saying within Spur for going beyond the normal call of duty: 'You are making the Indian proud!'"

**Direct Link:** <http://www.globalpost.com/article/6713168/2016/01/01/south-africas-most-popular-family-restaurant-native-american-themed>

## **Hopis say Boy Scout performances make mockery of tradition, religion**

The Koshare Dancers perform at Richlands Middle School in Richlands, Va., in 2011. A group of Colorado Boy Scouts has been performing at the Koshare Indian Museum in La Junta, Colo. — and around the nation — for years. But recent controversy over the performances has halted an annual holiday show at the museum this year.



A PBS documentary filmed in 1989 features the Boy Scout Troop 232 of La Junta, Colo., and their interpretations of Native American dances. The documentary won the Best Documentary Non-Metro Denver category from the Colorado Broadcasters Association. Watch the video on our website at [www.santafenewmexican.com](http://www.santafenewmexican.com). Courtesy image taken from video

Posted: Saturday, January 2, 2016 9:00 pm | *Updated: 12:54 am, Mon Jan 4, 2016.*

**By Anne Constable  
The New Mexican**

For decades, Boy Scouts from Southern Colorado have been performing Indian dances during the holiday season at the Koshare Indian Museum in La Junta, Colo.

The Koshare Dancers, named for a Pueblo Indian clown society representing ancestral spirits, have visited 47 states and three different countries, attended Pueblo powwows and feast days, and even traveled to the White House and Madison Square Garden in New York. According to their website, they have been “recognized and accepted by the Native American community — the highest honor bestowed on a non-Indian group.”

But when Leigh Kuwanwisiwma, the director of the Hopi Office of Cultural Preservation in Kykotsmovi, Ariz., learned recently about the program and saw video online of some of the performances, he was disturbed. The performers, he said, were “mimicking our dances, but they were insensitive, as far as I’m concerned.”

Many other members of the tribe agreed with him, some of them posting their views on Facebook. “They’re making a mockery of our native religion,” one person said on the group’s Facebook page, while another wrote, “I can’t believe this Boy Scout troop thinks this is ok.”

Kuwanwisiwma wrote to the board of the museum asking for the dances to cease, and he followed up with phone calls. He called the Boy Scout performances “commercial exploitation” and said they were “mimicking the Hopi butterfly, buffalo and Tewa ceremonial clowns.”

Kuwanwisiwma said he got no response. But when he went to the Koshare Indian Museum’s website, he saw an announcement that the 2015 Winter Night Dances, scheduled to begin Dec. 19, had been canceled “for this year out of respect for our Native American friends and until there has been an opportunity to discuss the Hopi’s concerns in a timely manner.”

But Kuwanwisiwma said no one has contacted him. No one at the museum returned calls from a reporter seeking comment. And a representative of the Rocky Mountain Council of the Boys Scouts of America declined to comment.

Bette McFarren, a reporter for the *La Junta Tribune-Democrat*, said the museum notified the paper's editor earlier this month of the decision, and "we were all shocked. There's all kinds of respect given to the Hopi in those dances. Nothing is ever made fun of." And, she added, the experience is "kind of like going to church. It's just too bad. It's a big, big thing here."

According to Kuwanwisiwma, the Koshare Dancers perform a version of the Hopi butterfly dances as well as buffalo dances associated with the Northern New Mexico pueblos.

In Hopi culture, he said, younger boys and girls are "slowly guided through stages of life to engage in some of these dances." The attire of the Koshare Dancers, he said, was representative of Hopi dancers, but "they in no way represented how Hopis dance these dances." Moreover, he said, they don't understand the meaning of the dances. "You can't just decide to do these dances. It's a very careful process, founded on our kinship system."

This isn't the first time the Hopis have set out to stop outsiders from what they see as stealing their cultural traditions. In the early 1990s, Kuwanwisiwma said, a group of businessmen in Prescott, Ariz., calling themselves the Smoki Tribe, were presenting Hopi, Zuni and Plains Indian dances. They insisted they didn't mean any harm and were only trying to help the Hopis preserve their culture and religion, Kuwanwisiwma said. But the Hopis objected.

After a couple of years of protests, the group members' businesses began losing money, he said, and they finally stopped performing the dances.

Santa Clara Gov. Michael Chavarria called the Koshare dances a "slap in the face." "They don't know what they're dancing for, the purpose of it. It hurts us," he said. Chavarria said the All Indian Pueblo Council had discussed the issue and is expected to pass a resolution next month asking the Colorado Scouts to stop altogether. "They're mocking us as Native Americans," he said.

In a comment on the *La Junta Tribune-Democrat* website, a woman named Dee Dee wrote, "As a NM Pueblo citizen, this organization does not have permission and never will obtain the permission because everything this group has been mimicking belongs only to our people. This Boy Scout organization is clearly violating and interfering with our centuries old Pueblo spiritual practices and beliefs."

The Koshare Dancers have a long history in Colorado. According to the museum's website, they started as a small group of Boy Scouts who were interested in "Indian lore." A scoutmaster named J.F. "Buck" Burshears, who served the La Junta troop for 55 years, was inspired to start a program called the Boy Scout Indian Club in 1933. The boys remodeled a chicken coop in his backyard as a clubhouse and presented their first show in the basement of a local church.

According to the website, the Koshares are black-and-white striped characters who portray unacceptable behaviors in comic ways to teach community values.

The dancers are members of Troop 232 and Venturing Crew 2230 of the Rocky Mountain Council, Boy Scouts of America. To participate, they must have earned the Boy Scouts' Arrow of Light Award and be younger than 18. They also must maintain a C average in

school; read five books about Native American culture; and research, design and make their own costumes. They perform 50 or 60 shows a year, many at the Koshare Indian Museum's kiva. In 1995, girls were invited to participate as guest dancers.

The dancers' website says that the dances, which began in 1950, are "historically and culturally accurate" and "authentic representations of Native American dance."

**Direct Link:** [http://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local\\_news/hopis-say-boy-scout-performances-make-mockery-of-tradition-religion/article\\_d548665e-5767-5132-93e9-5d041b935d42.html](http://www.santafenewmexican.com/news/local_news/hopis-say-boy-scout-performances-make-mockery-of-tradition-religion/article_d548665e-5767-5132-93e9-5d041b935d42.html)

## **Navajo Blame EPA Inaction For Suicides**

An increase suicides has shattered Navajo Nation over the past year, and leaders are blaming an unusual source of the despair: a polluted river and the inaction of the EPA.

01.03.161:15 AM ET

For most Americans, the third week of December is about wrapping up Christmas shopping and prepping for a whirlwind of family gatherings. But for the leaders of the Navajo Nation, it's about something much heavier: suicide prevention.

Russell Begaye and Jonathan Nez, Navajo Nation's president and vice president, respectively, [issued an executive order](#) earlier that month designating the third week of December and one week in June for focusing on preventing suicide after a recent spate of deaths rocked the tribe.

While suicide has long taken a disproportionate number of [Native American lives](#), Begaye said in a recent interview with The Daily Beast that the spike in his community is new, and pointed to an unusual potential factor in the uptick: a destructive wastewater spill this past summer that impacted Navajo lands.

Begaye told The Daily Beast he was concerned that the destruction caused by the Colorado's Gold King Mine spill last August may be contributing to the suicide uptick and that the drawn-out clean-up efforts exacerbate the struggles that members of his community already face.

He added that the Environmental Protection Agency's response to the disaster—which he characterized as inefficient and counter-productive—added additional stress to a community already on edge.

"One of the things that they seemingly do is that they wait you out," he told The Daily Beast. "I mean, they—they'll say all the nice things, all the right things. They'll put the proposals on the table but you know that there's no real action, there's no real meat behind what they say."

The disaster happened on Aug. 5 when EPA personnel and contractors—ironically enough—were trying to clean out an abandoned mine. They accidentally broke a

dam, spilling millions of gallons of wastewater into Colorado's Animas River. The spill turned the river a mustard yellow color and caused widespread contamination.

This isn't the first time Begaye has raised the possibility that the river damage has led the Navajo to take their lives.

In testimony at a joint hearing before two House committees last year, he said the spill had compounded his people's "already significant historical trauma."

Navajo president, Shiprock leaders incensed at dirty crop, livestock water delivered by EPA contractor

KOB TV



"Already three suicides have occurred in the course of the last two weeks in affected communities along the River," he testified. "Our Department of Health is researching the connection of the suicides to the spill, and we are concerned that these might be the first of a larger cluster."

Begaye and the EPA tussled last summer over the agency's offer to reimburse certain Navajo farmers impacted by the spill. Some Navajo leaders argued that by taking certain checks the agency initially offered, farmers could have inadvertently forfeited their rights to future additional compensation.

The tribe is gearing up to sue the agency. And the Navajo Nation's attorney general, Ethel Branch, has pressed the agency on whether or not it's doing everything it can to set up an interim claims process for farmers.

**"People so value the water, the river, Navajo people do. I think the stress knowing that it's polluted and frankly there are still some unknowns." —Rick Hendy, Utah Navajo Health Systems' director of behavioral health.**

The EPA did not comment on the record for this story.

Begaye isn't the only one suggesting there's a link between the river contamination and the suicide spike.

"The pollution from the river has been, it sorta [sic] wears on everybody," Rick Hendy, Utah Navajo Health Systems' director of behavioral health, [told a local Fox affiliate](#).

"People so value the water, the river, Navajo people do. I think the stress knowing that it's polluted and frankly there are still some unknowns."

Others argue the causal link may not be as direct as Begaye says.

In an [AP story](#) headlined "Link between suicides, mine spill not clear-cut," the vice president of one of the Navajo Nation's Utah chapters cast doubt on the president's argument.

"I'm not really sure how this could be related to the contamination of the river," said Bill Todachennie, who helps head the Aneth chapter in the Beehive State. "Personally, I don't know how you could hook [them] together."

The AP report notes that in the time since the spill, there have been at least six suicides in the Navajo communities along the river impacted by the pollution.

The deaths are especially disturbing because Native Americans already face disproportionately high suicide rates; according to [a Centers for Disease Control report](#) released in September of this year. Based on data from 2012-2013, the report said Native American men age 18-24 were twice as likely to commit suicide than just about any other gender, racial, and ethnic subgroup. The report notes that the reality is probably even worse than that particular figure indicates, as nearly one-third of suicides by Native Americans go unreported. The tragedy adds an extra layer of pain to a group of people already disproportionately likely to face poverty and [die of HIV complications](#) than the general population.

Still, though, the last few months have been uniquely devastating. And it's a sobering reminder that mental health and environmental health are often inextricably linked.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2016/01/03/navajo-blame-epa-inaction-for-suicides.html>

## **New nonprofit focuses on recovery from historical trauma**

January 03, 2016 5:00 am • Mike Anderson Journal staff

A pain passed down through generations is the target of a new nonprofit counseling and education service that its director hopes can help curb such lingering Native American problems as the suicide epidemic among the young.

Historical trauma, a term that refers to past transgressions against ethnic, religious or other minority groups, can be debilitating to the present generation, says Ruby Gibson, director of Freedom Lodge, which recently opened in Rapid City.

"If there are repeated traumas — assaults, deaths, loss of homelands — all the things we know happened to Native people, if all those things are happening continuously or simultaneously, then there's never any chance to recover," Gibson said. "So it begins to accumulate and create stress. And that stress has finally landed in this generation of our youth."

After working all over the world in countries suffering from the ravages of war, Gibson has decided to focus her efforts on the Native Americans of South Dakota. On the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, between 20 and 23 young people have committed suicide in a little more than a year.

The concept of historical trauma was developed to help explain the enduring, multi-generational effects that the Holocaust has had on Jewish people, or that World War II internment camps in the United States have had on Japanese Americans.

Maria Yellow Horse Brave Heart, a Lakota who became a social worker, earned a Ph.D. in clinical social work and is now a professor at the University of New Mexico, has written that historical trauma has contributed to ongoing problems experienced by Native Americans.

In a paper published in 2000 by the Tulane University School of Social Work, she wrote about the "traumatic" history of the Lakota, including the Wounded Knee Massacre and the period in which Native American children were taken from families and sent to boarding schools.

Yellow Horse Brave Heart wrote: "Manifestations of the historical trauma response include depression, self-destructive behavior, psychic numbing, poor affect tolerance, anger and elevated mortality rates from suicide and cardiovascular diseases observed among Jewish Holocaust survivors and descendants as well as among the Lakota."

"Historical trauma is much larger than one or two incidents," said Cari Michaels an extension educator at the University of Minnesota, where she specializes in children's mental health. "One of the phrases used is 'total cultural erasure.' It's really about trying to take a way a whole culture's identity."

Historical trauma, she said, can be kept alive in the form of everyday examples of prejudice and racism.

"Historical trauma is not only about what has happened in the past," Michaels said. "It's still happening now."

Whether it's the still reverberating anguish of the 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre or the painful memories of the boarding school era, today's Native youth are bearing a heavy burden of historical trauma, Gibson said.

She said Freedom Lodge will provide free youth suicide-prevention services and historical-trauma counseling sessions to all enrolled tribal members.

But Gibson doesn't want her service's reach to end there. Her goal is to educate the educators in Rapid City about how they can integrate trauma awareness into the classroom so young people can recognize and cope with their own historical trauma.

"When you don't have an ability to say 'yes' or 'no,' when you can't speak up for yourself and be heard, when someone overpowers you and takes away your dignity and your rights," Gibson said, "that's when trauma happens."

As Gibson sees it, historical trauma inhabits not just the minds but the physical bodies of those who endure it. Those bodies are "walking libraries of experience," and catalogued in those libraries are the collective stories and life experiences of one's ancestors.

"A woman is born with all of her eggs," Gibson said. "So when I was just an egg in my mother's womb, she was inside my grandmother's womb ... and that can either be a place of safety or a place of fear, a place of nurturing or a place of stress."

Humans, Gibson said, oscillate between high and low states of rest and hyperactive motion, between the instinct to hunker down and the instinct to fight back. Finding a normal balance between such polar states is key to survival.

The problem with a culture awash in historical trauma is that "normal" doesn't exist any more.

"A lot of people want to go back," Gibson said, "to remember the days before our colonization to find our 'normal,' to remember who we were when we were free."

Learning to cope with the collective experiences of an entire culture is an enormous challenge that requires positivity and communal support, Gibson said, things that she hopes the Freedom Lodge can help cultivate.

"Our survival depends on each other, so we'd better stay connected," Gibson said. "But how do we connect safely? How do we connect in a way that honors each other?"

Located at the Black Hills Historical Trauma Research & Recovery Center in Rapid City, Freedom Lodge is holding an open house gathering from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 10. The address is 809 South Street, Suite 205.

Gibson invites the public to stop by or visit [FreedomLodge.org](http://FreedomLodge.org) to learn more about historical trauma and Freedom Lodge's approach to addressing it.

**Direct Link:** [http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/new-nonprofit-focuses-on-recovery-from-historical-trauma/article\\_e51466af-8a75-5360-b596-efa69cfecf1d.html](http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/new-nonprofit-focuses-on-recovery-from-historical-trauma/article_e51466af-8a75-5360-b596-efa69cfecf1d.html)

## **Bill would lift protections on some historic effigy mounds**



One of about 25 Indian mounds is shown at Lizard Mound County Park near West Bend. Landowners could excavate and possibly develop some of the surviving Indian mounds of Wisconsin — many dating back more than a millennium, under legislation by two lawmakers.

By *Jason Stein* of the *Journal Sentinel*  
Jan. 2, 2016

**Madison**— Landowners could excavate and possibly develop some of the surviving Indian mounds of Wisconsin — many dating back more than a millennium — under legislation by two lawmakers.

The bill from Sen. Chris Kapenga (R-Delafield) and Rep. Robert Brooks (R-Saukville) would shift the balance of state law more toward private property rights and away from the preservation of one of the state's unusual features.

The earthen burial mounds, shaped like bears, deer, panthers, birds and people, can stretch hundreds of feet in length or width and are one of the most enduring forms of art in the state. It's been estimated that 80% were plowed under or otherwise destroyed to make way for farms and buildings, and those remaining sites that are cataloged are protected from disturbance by state law.

The proposal has alarmed Robert Birmingham, the author of two books on the state's Indian mounds. Birmingham, a professor at the University of Wisconsin-Waukesha and a former state archaeologist, called the mounds a "world archaeological wonder."

"It is unparalleled in that we have the mounds, some of them in awesome proportions. ... Having such an explicit monumental architecture (of early natives) that reflects their religious beliefs is amazing," Birmingham said.

The draft bill on the mounds has already won some powerful backers, including the Wisconsin Manufacturers & Commerce and the Wisconsin Builders Association. It arises in part from a case involving Wingra Stone and Redi-Mix, which owns a quarry north of McFarland where an effigy mound has blocked the extraction of materials around and below it.

Under the draft measure, the Wisconsin Historical Society would be required to give property owners a permit allowing them to investigate at their own expense whether their mounds contain burial remains, either through an archaeological dig or through ground-

penetrating radar. If the mounds contained no remains, landowners could use their property however they wished.

"While (the draft bill) will maintain the (Historical Society) mission to protect human burial sites and preserve history for future generations, it will also make common-sense reforms to current law to help ensure private property is not wrongly placed on the SHS burial site catalog and essentially frozen from use," Kapenga and Brooks wrote in a memo to other lawmakers.

The leaders of the Ho-Chunk Nation count the mound builders as ancestors of their tribe and they have launched a website to counter the bill as well as planned a rally at the Capitol on Jan. 12.

"These are sacred sites and for many of them it would be like churches and mosques are (for other believers). This is how we would consider them," said tribal president Wilfred Cleveland.

Cleveland said tribal officials plan to meet soon with Kapenga about the bill. For his part, Kapenga said in an email he would hold off on commenting more about his legislation until after that meeting.

Effigy mounds in southern Wisconsin and surrounding states date to the time that scholars call the Late Woodland Period, which stretched from 700 to 1100. They were often built in clusters and some can still be found in Milwaukee suburbs and in Madison not far from the Capitol. Some are geometric shapes while others clearly depict spirits or birds with up to 600-foot wingspans, nearly equal to the length of two football fields. Students across Wisconsin learn about them in state history classes.

Birmingham said human remains have been found in about 90% of the mounds that have been excavated and already a majority of the thousands of mounds that once dotted the southern part of the state have been cleared to make way for development.

Cleveland said that in some cases human remains in a mound may have decomposed. Either way, his tribe is opposed to disturbing not only the burial sites but what they represent.

Pointing to bear mounds, Cleveland said he was a member of his tribe's bear clan, which traditionally had duties similar to those of modern-day police.

"I see the bear there. I see the foresight and vision that our ancestors had and it's working up to this day," he said of the ties between the mounds and tribal ways.

Increase Lapham, often considered Wisconsin's first scientist, helped survey and study the mounds in the 19th century and published his findings with the Smithsonian Institution.

Under current law, the state will take action at times to protect recognized effigy mounds, such as an occasion in January 2008 when Pabst Farms developers were ordered to repair and better protect panther-shaped mounds near a large construction site after work crews damaged them.

That law is at the center of a legal fight involving Wingra Stone. The company has challenged the site's legal protections in Dane County Circuit Court and won, but the Historical Society and the Ho-Chunk Nation have appealed the ruling.

Wingra president Bob Shea, who could not be reached for comment, is a frequent contributor to mostly Republican officials, but not to the main lawmakers who are offering the legislation.

The bill has the potential to affect more mounds than those at issue with Wingra Stone, however. Its provisions would affect every burial mound that has been cataloged by the state as well as those that may turn up in the future.

Going forward, the Historical Society would also only be able to catalog and protect effigy mound sites that can be demonstrated to contain human remains.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.jsonline.com/news/wisconsin/bill-would-lift-protections-on-some-historic-effigy-mounds-b99638851z1-364038161.html>

## Teach for America hopes to recruit more Native American students



Jim Curran, executive director of Teach for America in South Dakota.

10 hours ago • [Mike Anderson Journal staff](#)

Tribal members from three of South Dakota's Native American reservations have a new pathway to enter careers as educators.

Teach for America has forged partnerships with the tribal councils of both the Rosebud and Standing Rock reservations, as well as with administrators at the Red Cloud Indian School on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation.

Jim Curran, executive director of Teach for America in South Dakota, said the goal of the partnerships is to recruit more Native Americans whose college degrees are in education

in hopes they will return to the reservations as teachers. When a graduate is accepted into the program, Teach for America finds him or her a teaching job.

“Every school board, every kid, every parent on the reservation wants great teachers in front of their students,” Curran said. “Most of them want Lakota teachers in front of Lakota kids.”

Teach for America is a nonprofit working to increase educational opportunities for students in poverty-stricken areas, which aligns perfectly with Sierra Concha’s mission.

“Ever since I was little, I’ve always wanted to help other people,” she said. “I’ve always loved kids and teaching.”

A graduate of Red Cloud Indian School on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation, Concha, 23, is a junior majoring in secondary education with an emphasis in English studies at the University of New Mexico. She plans on transferring to Black Hills State University this year so she can be closer to home.

Her goal always has been to return to the reservation as a teacher, so when Nakina Mills, director of student advancement and alumni support at Red Cloud, told Concha about the new teaching opportunities available through Teach for America, she eagerly applied.

“I like the fact that its main goal is to have the people who join it teach in lower-income communities,” Concha said. “This community definitely needs people who are passionate about helping others. That’s what Teach for America is.”

Mills’ job is to provide support and resources to students from Red Cloud during their college careers. With Teach for America stepping up its recruitment efforts on the reservation, her job now includes acting as a liaison between the group and the schools’ students.

It’s still very early in Teach for America’s involvement at Red Cloud, but of the 20 or so alumni she has contacted, Mills said that about 10 have interest in applying to the program.

“It’s been a good response so far,” Mills said. “I think it’s a great opportunity for not only our students but for other students in South Dakota to give back to their communities. This is another way for them to do that.”

Curran said his group has been working behind the scenes for the better part of five years to get more involved on the reservations in South Dakota.

“We at Teach for America want to fuel a movement to end educational inequity,” Curran said, “to get to that day where every single kid can do what they want with their lives. We are very far from that day right now. But this partnership is rooted in the belief that kids have the answers that outside entities don’t have. The more we can recruit from our communities, the more we can unlock these problems.”

Building partnerships with tribal leaders and the administrators at Red Cloud, Curran added, has moved his group's efforts closer to reality.

"We want our alumni to positively impact the Pine Ridge Reservation," said Robert Brave Heart Sr., executive vice president of Red Cloud Indian School, in a press-release. "Our new collaboration will support efforts to bring more employment opportunities to our community as well as support our students."

Concha plans to begin her application to the program soon. If all goes as planned, she will be working for Teach For America in 2017 while she pursues a master's in education.

**Direct Link:** [http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/teach-for-america-hopes-to-recruit-more-native-american-students/article\\_cf503f78-e708-5e55-9c2b-d295522b3ee2.html](http://rapidcityjournal.com/news/local/teach-for-america-hopes-to-recruit-more-native-american-students/article_cf503f78-e708-5e55-9c2b-d295522b3ee2.html)

## **How Ancient Native American Rock Art Is Tearing a California Town Apart**

By Barret Baumgart, January 5, 2016

At 1.2 million acres, Naval Air Weapons Station China Lake is the largest parcel of land owned by the US Navy. It fills an expanse of remote and rugged desert terrain bigger than Rhode Island; to the naked eye, there's not much going on inside. You might spend a whole day driving around the perimeter of the base and, notwithstanding an occasional low-flying F-16 fighter jet, never guess there was anything outside your window beyond barren volcanic tablelands, stands of brittle burrobush, and the occasional sidewinder rattlesnake.

What makes NAWS China Lake special—beyond being a secret test center for the world's most advanced weapons—is that inside a handful of its narrow lava canyons lies the largest concentration of Native American rock art in the Western Hemisphere. The images, carvings known as petroglyphs, are found throughout China Lake's Coso Range and are the oldest in the Americas. Archeologists have dated some of the images as far back as 15,000 to 19,000 years, and nobody has ever successfully counted them. A single canyon—Renegade Canyon, or as it's more commonly called, Little Petroglyph Canyon—may contain more than **1 million** images of bighorn sheep, shamans, and abstract geometric symbols.

While archeologists have argued over the function of these and other figures for half a century, their original meanings largely remain a mystery. What nobody contests, however, is that the Coso Range was once one of the most spiritually important sites on the continent.

Some New Age types consider the Coso Range a "vortex"—a geographic location where harmonizing spiritual energy is supposedly highly concentrated. Examples of such places apparently include the Pyramids at Giza, Stonehenge, and the red rocks of Sedona, Arizona. Even if you don't put stock in such dubious concepts, being in the presence of such ancient and sacred symbols can be a powerful—and humbling—experience.

For decades, however, their location inside a military base dedicated to top-secret weapons testing meant that the only people who knew—or cared—about the petroglyphs were a handful of Native American tribes, professional archaeologists, and a subculture of Indian art geeks and New Age vision seekers. But Ridgecrest, California—the small desert town just outside the main gates of China Lake—is attempting to change that, and turn the petroglyphs into a full-fledged international tourist destination.

This effort has created a clash between competing economic and cultural interests. For many members of the Native American tribes throughout the region, the Coso Range and its petroglyphs are the most sacred things in the world, but some say that the sanctity and very survival of the artwork is threatened by Ridgecrest's attempt to cash in on the petroglyphs and sell itself as "California's newest cultural mecca"—the Petroglyph Capital of the World.

In 2014, Ridgecrest's then-mayor Dan Clark proposed an entire festival centered around the petroglyphs, describing it as a potential "economic engine" for the city of Ridgecrest. "The petroglyph festival will be our signature event," he told the *LA Times*. "We're going to saturate this community with representations of rock art." Denny Kline, a field officer for Mick Gleason, Kern County's District 1 Supervisor, told reporters, "It's going to be the city's 50th anniversary on steroids." Sponsors for the four-day festival included Coca-Cola, General Electric, NASA, the Ford Foundation, McDonald's, and Home Depot, among others.

A year later, the town remains committed to becoming the "American 'Machu Picchu,'" as arecent press release proclaimed. That release quoted Doug Lueck, the executive director of the Ridgecrest Area Convention and Visitor's Bureau (RACVB), as saying, "Not only is tourism up, we're also experiencing an upward trend in filming for movies and commercials as well." According to Leuck, the first annual Petroglyph Festival "had over 1,000 media impressions over television and radio" and sold out local hotels. Harris Brokke, the former director of Ridgecrest's Maturango Museum, told the local paper. "Not only is the festival successful, but when people come to the festival, they come back again and again, and that's our whole goal."

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"Ridgecrest has tried to brand itself in a lot of different ways," a retired Navy veteran named Mike tells me. "There's no real tourism here. Most people either work on the base or the service industry that supports it."

We're standing in the parking lot of Ridgecrest's new \$6 million tourist attraction, Petroglyph Park. House finches flit between palm trees and brown monoliths carved with depictions of bighorns, zigzags, and shamans; in the background traffic hums along China Lake Boulevard.

"The city tried the Balloon Festival two years in a row, but the winds were horrendous and just destroyed everything," Mike says. Ridgecrest also launched a spring Wildflower Festival, but given the reality of the California drought and the fact that Ridgecrest only gets a few inches of rain each year, the flowers didn't always show. "But the Petroglyph Festival is something that's uniquely Ridgecrest," Mike says.

Behind us, across the street, music booms from the stage at the center of the Balsam Street Fair, where 200 vendors have set up tents selling scented candles, foreign war memorabilia, and dreamcatchers made in China. It's the second annual Petroglyph Festival, a showcase for the best parts of the town held in November. Balsam Street functions as Ridgecrest's version of a downtown arts district. Elsewhere in the city, abandoned storefronts mingle with used furniture dealers; bail bonds shops sit in squat strip malls with asphalt that looks like it hasn't been repaved since the Vietnam War—but on Balsam Street you find a newly painted bighorn sheep or shaman on nearly every available wall. This is, without question, the Petroglyph Capital of the World.

The catch, however, is that historically it's been extremely difficult to see the actual petroglyphs of the Coso Range. According to the RACVB, 15,000 people traveled from over 50 countries for the 2014 Petroglyph Festival. But only around 40 American citizens who applied early and passed a federal background check were able to view the carvings inside the base. This year, though, an RACVB spokesperson tells me, the Navy had "agreed to forgo the vetting process" and let 500 people see the petroglyphs, including many non-Americans, who would normally be barred from entering the base at all.

Among them is a woman from Germany named Karin. She waited years for the opportunity to make a pilgrimage to the petroglyphs; during November's festival she finally did it. "Everything from the drive, the Joshua trees, the beauty of the mountains. The whole landscape was just magic. We saw wild horses," she tells me. "It's obvious why the petroglyphs are there." I ask if she learned anything. "Imagination," she replies. "Imagination is what you need."

Another woman, a Japanese citizen named Maiko, had been waiting nine years for the opportunity. "I'm actually a petroglyph freak. I go to all the sites. It's just attractive to me. I want to see the art. So I do the research on the internet. And then I go there and look for it."

Those whose love for petroglyphs burns less ardently make do with Petroglyph Park, where you can gaze at reproductions of the carvings and experience an Epcot version of the ancient etchings. City and county officials often emphasize the sacredness of the petroglyphs and the educational aspect of the attraction—"the concept of the park is to honor the Native American heritage of the Indian Wells Valley," says Denny Kline—or

as Mayor Clark **has said** of the petroglyphs, "We can bring it to the public's attention what a national treasure they are and, hopefully, they will respect them."

But the park and the festival are unquestionably money-making affairs—the whole point is to draw in vendors and tourism dollars. And many aspects of the festival seem less interested in history and education than hustling and speculation.

I head over to the north end of Balsam Street, where Rod "The Buffalo Man" Blankenship—a Korean and Vietnam War Veteran, and "an Elder in the Cherokee Indian Nation"—is talking about the buffalo to a crowd inside the Old Town Theater. The animals were "a supermarket and hardware store," according to Blankenship, who punctuates his pronouncements with shakes of a ceremonial rattle made from dried buffalo scrotum. Toward the end of the talk, I raise my hand and ask him how important the buffalo was to the Native American tribes in the surrounding area, and he admits that the animals weren't out here in California. But maybe some of the petroglyphs depict buffalo?

"It's possible," he says. "You know what you'll see in some of those petroglyphs, though?" He pauses and seems to stare out above the audience, straight through the back of the auditorium at something unseen. "You'll see pictures of what you call,"—another pause—"aliens. They're pictures of space people. With big round heads. Oval heads."

Other lecturers in the festival's educational "Speakers' Series" include a local wilderness entrepreneur who runs private tours of petroglyph sites that aren't on Naval land—"If you're interested, we can talk prices later," he tells the audience—and an archeologist who also offers private tours. Both do so despite heavy discouragement by the federal Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which fears that if the locations of off-base petroglyph sites become widely known they'll be vandalized or stolen.

Outside the Old Town Theater, across Freedom Park, smoke billows up from the cookers stationed behind the Intertribal Powwow and Cherokee Hog Fry. The powwow has all the usual signifiers of Native American life: tepees, donkeys, women dressed in buckskin suits, men on folding chairs beating a large leather drum, vendors hawking dream catchers and geodes. The festival advertises the drummers, dancers, and vendors as members of the local Native American tribes, but the Cherokee have no ancestral ties to the land or the ancient peoples responsible for the petroglyphs.

"We didn't use tepees and we're not a powwow culture and we didn't eat pigs. They're teaching people that this is what the people looked like that were here," says Jonnie Benson, a member of the Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone who adds that it's the "miseducation" of the community that is most upsetting. "They took a real touristy approach. Now we have all these people walking away after this weekend thinking, 'Oh, wow, I've learned all about the natives who live here,' when in fact they don't know shit. They learned the Hollywood story."

Down the street from the powwow sits another sore point for some local tribes: a plywood board painted with two shaman figures, their faces cutout to allow tourists to poke their heads through and smile for pictures.

"It's so offensive. Our ancestors put those marks on the rocks, whether people want to believe that or not. It's sacred to me, and to see it as basically a caricature, with people putting their faces in it—they don't know what those symbols mean," says Benson, who'd seen the pictures on Facebook. "I don't know how people would take it if there was a painting of Jesus up there and people were sticking their faces in it. Right? It just wouldn't be cool."

Though the Petroglyph Festival is based around the cheerful, corporate-ready commercialization of the Coso rock art, the petroglyphs themselves depict strange and often violent imagery. On nearly every cliff face of Renegade Canyon, you find not simply pictures of bighorn sheep, but bighorns etched in the throes of death, their bodies impaled with spears and torn by arrows.

The mood on petroglyph tours is, if not somber, generally one of quiet reverence. Tour guides do an especially good job just hanging back, allowing the art to sink into the group, and not pushing forth any interpretation. Though they do occasionally step in. I remember on my first tour of Renegade Canyon, a woman kept pointing out the strange round-headed humanoids carved in the walls, and saying, "Look, an alien wearing a space helmet," or, "Look, an alien with a cell phone."

"Archeologists call those 'patterned body anthropomorphs,'" a guide eventually told her, adding that the art was still sacred to the tribes throughout the region, and it was disrespectful to infantilize the art of their ancestors in such a way.

When the festival isn't happening, normal tours of Renegade Canyon, arranged through the Maturango Museum in Ridgecrest, take 20 people on select weekend dates determined by the military during the fall and spring months. The Navy makes you sign a form that releases them from responsibility should you break a leg or catch a stray bomb, and the background checks conducted by the military usually take two to three weeks. The tours cost \$40 and nearly ever one sells out. Excluding the festival, only about 800 people make it in to see the art each year.

In many ways the tours seem like a routine trail walk. People park in a dusty lot, tightening their boots and backpacks while guides take a headcount. In the distance below, the black gash of Renegade Canyon cuts west across the wide desert terrace, its exit at the lower ridge too far off to see.

A trail winds out through the fragrant burrobush, sage, and creosote, out from the edge of the dirt lot to the rim of the canyon, where it drops down through a steep side wash. Below, bright lichens cover the brown walls of the canyon, but you can't see anything yet. Guides remind you to watch your step as gravel crunches underfoot. Sunlight burns against your back, painting your blue outlines as you file forward and the walls narrow

and voices hush. A carpet of soft sand covers the canyon floor. Like children sneaking into some forbidden sanctuary, everyone keeps trading excited and worried glances, scanning for the first petroglyph—but there's only the vast silence of the canyon, impenetrable as the rock walls closing you in. You glance back. Faraway, along the eastern horizon, a pair of perfectly formed volcanic domes lay like soft breasts tanning in the morning sun.

Then, without a word, the digital camera shutters start clicking. Up ahead, a dozen people stand aiming at the rock wall, while others crouch and kneel, jostling for position. Five pale shoe-sized sheep engravings cover the dark basalt. Geometric designs wrap around the periphery. A man crawls up for a closeup and one of the guides tells him that it's close enough: "Everyone, please keep back at least two feet from the petroglyphs." People keep vying for position, standing on their toes with cameras raised, as though the tiny darting sheep were actually alive, actually running away, fleeing the hungry tourist photographs.

Just minutes later, this initial flurry of photography seems absurd. The canyon contains more petroglyphs than any camera eye or human memory can record. By the time most people reach the cliff at the end of the canyon, they've stopped taking pictures, stopped talking altogether—they just sit and stare off into the expanse below.

The cumulative effect of the canyon is hard to describe. It's not something you can get from simply looking at a few panels of petroglyphs. You have to spend the whole day walking the canyon's entire length to let the images wash over you. Not everyone who takes the tour hikes the mile and a half down to the end—some people only go halfway and then return to the shaded picnic table beside the parking lot. You cannot get this cumulative effect if you turn back. Nor can you get it from other petroglyph sites off base or the tours during the Petroglyph Festival, which only spend an hour at the canyon's entrance.

Everyone's experience differs, I'm sure. For me, an initial impression, if there ever was one, that the petroglyphs resembled something inspirational or alien faded away the further I walked down the canyon. It was replaced by a sense of awe at the sheer number of etchings, which in turn gave rise to a sensation of mild dread when I realized that they all mostly depict the same image—bighorn sheep.

And as you continue to wander down the length of the narrow lava canyon, despite the open sky, the clean desert light, and the quiet conversation of the people around you, a feeling of claustrophobia begins to assert itself. And the further you venture, the more the canyon narrows, and the more pictures you pass, the deeper this feeling extends, until you come to understand that you've entered a place that is not your home, gawked at pictures not made for your enjoyment, photographed panels of bighorn sheep never made for pleasure but rather in pain, ripped out from the walls by desperate men with bloody fingers over so many lonely millennia, and once you reach the end of the canyon and see how many times that single intentional image occurred, a final conclusion presents itself: Something went wrong here.

No one knows for certain what the rocks record. But they have been perfectly preserved thanks to airtight military security. Even the tribes who revere the rock art of the Cosos have to jump through hoops to pay their respects.

"The sites still have their power but we can't use them properly; we have to be escorted and they watch us down at the hot springs and it's very irritating," says Kathy Bancroft, the Cultural Officer for the Lone Pine Paiute-Shoshone.

"At this point in the journey," says Jodie Benson, "I'm just grateful that the art is out there on Navy land, and not just anybody can go out there."

Not all the petroglyphs are on land protected by the military, however, and as the art has become more famous, Native Americans and archaeologists worry about people damaging other unprotected sites or stealing the petroglyphs right off the walls. The worst case of vandalism occurred not long before the first annual Ridgecrest Petroglyph Festival, in an area north of the Cosos. In a matter of hours, looters wielding power saws, electric generators, and ladders managed to steal a handful of petroglyphs that had survived thousands of years of natural erosion.

"Anybody could have driven out on top of them, there would have been a dust cloud," Greg Haverstock, an archaeologist at the Bureau of Land Management, tells me. "These people were extremely bold." The event was the worst case of vandalism ever seen on the nearly 1 million acres of public land managed by Haverstock's BLM office.

Though multiple people I talked to say that cases of vandalism were on the rise, there was some disagreement about the cause. Donald Storm, another BLM archaeologist, says that China Lake's severely restricted access is a problem—if people can't enter the base they might go looking for petroglyphs on unprotected land. "If they're out in the public domain, damage is more likely because these sites are hard to control," he says.

Bob Robinson, the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer of the Kern Valley Indian Council, thinks that the festival is not helping to reduce the destruction. "As it is we have enough problems with sites being vandalized without all the promotion of the festival." Robinson says that tourists need to know that the petroglyphs are not doodles on rocks, but put there for a reason, and they're part of a living ongoing culture that is here today: "People need to understand that they're sacred and they need to be treated with respect." According to Robinson, this is the "education part that I hope will be there at the festival, and not this thing of creating this whole New Age story around aliens putting them there."

But Robinson isn't very optimistic. He describes the festival as "commercial exploitation. They're turning it into a Roswell bullshit."

This, ultimately, is the dividing line between Ridgecrest and some local Native Americans, who see the festival not just as a commercialization of their culture but something that could literally fuel the destruction of their sacred symbols.

"The worst thing about it is the town of Ridgecrest," says Kathy Bancroft. "They want to be the petroglyph capital of the world. I heard that on the local radio station and I thought, *Who said they should do that?*" Bancroft says it's incredibly disrespectful for the festival to be promoting the petroglyphs with vandalism on the rise.

On this point, everyone agrees: Protecting the petroglyphs is the most important thing. "The only way that the petroglyphs will continue to be here for a very long time is by protecting them and respecting them," says Debbie Benson, the current director of the Maturango Museum, which organizes tours of Renegade Canyon. "Not all petroglyphs are on the base. If people are harming them and don't understand them and not respecting them, they will not last."

Some of the materials in Petroglyph Park are of dubious educational value, however. One large engraving near the entrance is entirely unlike any of the actual petroglyphs; when I asked archaeologists about it they said they had never laid eyes anything like it. "I can honestly say I've never seen an image in rock art that resembled that even closely," Greg Haverstock said. "I look at that and I think 1950s sci-fi aliens."

The particular stand of petroglyphs is labeled "Shamanic Visions or Alien Visitors." The placard in front of it pays lip service to the popular New Age concept—promoted by Erich von Däniken's 1967 bestseller *Chariots of the Gods*—that many rock art images throughout the world portray aliens who visited earth, planted the seeds of consciousness in primitive humanity, and made possible all the cultural achievements of ancient man. This notion has been criticized for minimizing the actual artistic achievements of indigenous people and for simply being shoddy history. "That writing as careless as von Däniken's," Carl Sagan wrote in 1976, "whose principal thesis is that our ancestors were dummies, should be so popular is a sober commentary on the credulousness and despair of our times."

As it stands now, the tribes have no interest in participating in the Petroglyph Festival. None of the Native Americans I spoke to had ever attended it, and some, like Bob Robinson, openly condemned it. "They're just cashing in on something sacred. They're selling it. And I don't want any part," he says. "We don't want to participate because of the money."

Kathy Bancroft says that Ridgecrest never even approached her tribe about the festival. All they did was send advertisements. "If I really felt they cared and wanted to do it right maybe I'd participate," Bancroft says. "They've taken something sacred and spiritual and created a stereotype, a team mascot for the city of Ridgecrest, and it makes me sick."

Some Native Americans I spoke with emphasize that a festival that educated the public about the petroglyphs *could* be beneficial, if it made people more aware of the sacred

nature of the rock carvings and the history behind them. Barbara Dutton, a member of the Death Valley Timbisha-Shoshone, tells me the festival was "a good opportunity for educating the general public about how important these sites are to the native people." But Dutton did admit, "I don't know what kind of information they have out there."

Given the information I encountered there, the Petroglyph Festival appears to have little interest in educating the public about the sacred nature of the rock art or the history behind it—which is truly a shame.

The petroglyphs at China Lake can be interpreted many ways. I prefer an explanation offered by archeologist David Whitley, who thinks that the Coso Range was once the central pilgrimage point for rainmaking shaman throughout the Great Basin.

"The images should not be interpreted in a literal sense," Whitley says. The petroglyphs represent not literal hunting scenes but rather "graphic expressions of the visions of rain shamans that, themselves, were metaphors for the rain shaman's supernatural control over the weather." The images of mutilated bighorns represent prayers for rain, not bighorns, according to Whitley.

As anyone who has lived through California's ongoing drought knows, we still pray for rain, though we do it in different ways. It was in China Lake where the military crafted the rain-making technology of "cloud seeding," which was deployed during the Vietnam War in an attempt to flood the Ho Chi Minh Trail. Today the technique, which involves shooting particles into clouds to form ice crystals, is used across the American West, including California, to ward off drought. It isn't clear, however, that cloud seeding is any better at bringing rain than carving bighorns into the sides of rocks.

If you go to the Ridgecrest Petroglyph Festival, or if you visit the rock art of the Coso Range, don't approach the art lightly. Don't dismiss its creators as being primitive, or assume they needed to be influenced by UFOs in order to make their art. Think about their world, plagued with uncertainty, their struggles to scratch out lives against the harshness of the Mojave Desert. And think about the uncertainties of our own world today—the reality of global climate change and a perpetual war on terror. Remember that at China Lake, while the military continues to protect the traces of past man, in the same breath, in the same location, they continue to perfect the art of erasing him from the present.

And if you have a chance, take a look some of the most impressive petroglyphs, the rare ones depicting the skinny men riding strange animals, the white men arriving—the aliens. Ask yourself: Who will last longer—us or the petroglyphs?

*Barret Baumgart has published essays and stories in the Gettysburg Review, The Literary Review, The Seneca Review, and Camera Obscura. He is currently working on a book about the history of military weather modification and the future of global climate engineering. He cleans beer glasses for a living at brewery in downtown Los Angeles.*

**Direct Link:** <http://www.vice.com/read/how-ancient-native-american-rock-art-is-tearing-a-california-town-apart>

## **Former National Park Superintendent Pleads Guilty To Theft Of Native American Remains**

Wisconsin Man Kept Remains In Garage For 17 Years

Tuesday, January 5, 2016, 9:40am

By Hope Kirwan

A former superintendent of Effigy Mounds National Monument in Iowa has plead guilty to stealing Native American remains after reaching a plea deal with the U.S. Attorney's Office, but still hasn't given an explanation for why he took the remains.

Thomas Munson retired from Effigy Mounds National Monument in 1994. He kept two boxes of remains in his garage in Prairie du Chien until 2011, when the park started an investigation into the missing boxes.

Despite reaching a plea deal and pleading guilty in district court, Munson still hasn't revealed why he removed the remains from the park.

Leon Spies, Munson's attorney, said the former superintendent probably won't explain until he issues an official apology to the Native American tribes affected.

"As part of the plea agreement, he's agreed to issue a written and an oral apology for what happened, and I think at the time that that apology is issued and becomes a matter of public record, it will give more clarity to what took place," he said.

Spies said Munson will issue this apology when he next appears in court.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.wpr.org/former-national-park-superintendent-pleads-guilty-theft-native-american-remains>

## **Joining Your Family's Native American Tribe**

Posted: 01/05/2016 2:16 pm EST Updated: 1 hour ago

**Henry Louis Gates, Jr.**

Alphonse Fletcher University Professor and Director of the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research at Harvard University

## Lisa Arnold

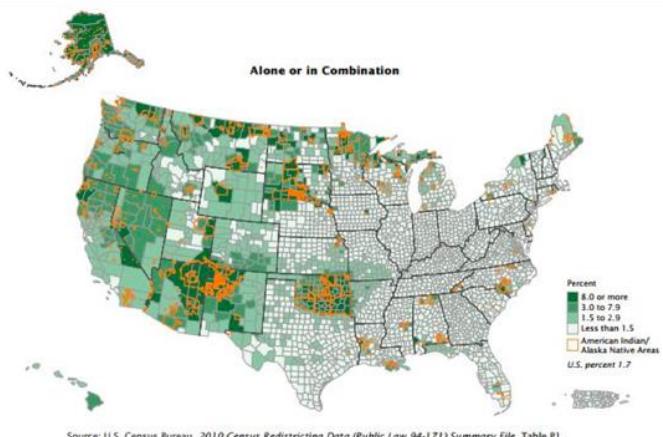
Senior Content Strategist on the Global Content Team at Ancestry.com

*Is it possible to become accepted into the Native American tribe of my ancestor? --David C.*

Many Americans believe they have at least one Native American ancestor. More than 900 nations, peoples, tribes, and bands (the terms are interchangeable) once lived on the North American continent, and more than 560 are recognized by the federal government today, with an additional 24 being recognized by states. However, an estimated 80 percent of Native American families became disconnected from each other and from their people over the years. So questions about how to become a member of a tribe are common.

The answer usually has to do with a concept called blood quantum (which we'll discuss later) and your ability to prove your Native American lineage.

Native American nations set their own enrollment criteria in constitutions, articles of incorporation, and ordinances. These can include tribal blood quantum, tribal residency, or continued contact with the tribe. The criteria vary from nation to nation, so uniform membership requirements do not exist. The key is knowing which tribe or band your ancestor most often aligned with.



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 Census Redistricting Data (Public Law 94-171) Summary File, Table P1.

*American Indian and Alaska Native as Percentage of County Population: 2010. (U.S. Census Bureau)*

### **Searching for Your Ancestor**

A good place to start your research is with the free [guide to American Indian research](#) at Ancestry, which is full of hints and strategies.

You need to track your family generation by generation until you get back to the reservation or other location where you believe your Native American ancestor lived. Using U.S. Federal Census records is the easiest way to do this research. (Ancestry has a great article on [census search secrets](#) if you want some tips.) The 1910 census included an "Indian census" at the end of each county's enumeration that lists blood quantum and tribal affiliation. These records can be gold if your ancestor appears.

Ancestry has [more than two dozen record collections](#) that may reveal your ancestor's tribe. There are also terrific collections of photos, marriage records, allotment records

(referring to reservation land given to individuals by the government), and an index card file of over 800 articles and folders with information about Indians who were moved to Oklahoma.

The overwhelming majority of written records are from five Native American nations: Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Muskogee (Creek), and Seminole. The Federal government called these "The Five Civilized Tribes" for various reasons (one of which was the fact that they owned black slaves). Andrew K. Frank provides the following definition on the [Oklahoma Historical Society website](#):

The term 'Five Civilized Tribes' came into use during the mid-nineteenth century to refer to the Cherokee, Choctaw, Chickasaw, Creek, and Seminole nations. Although these Indian tribes had various cultural, political, and economic connections before removal in the 1820s and 1830s, the phrase was most widely used in Indian Territory and Oklahoma.

Americans, and sometimes American Indians, called the five Southeastern nations "civilized" because they appeared to be assimilating to Anglo-American norms. The term indicated the adoption of horticulture and other European cultural patterns and institutions, including widespread Christianity, written constitutions, centralized governments, intermarriage with white Americans, market participation, literacy, animal husbandry, patrilineal descent, and even slaveholding. None of these attributes characterized all of the nations or all of the citizens that they encompassed. The term was also used to distinguish these five nations from other so-called "wild" Indians who continued to rely on hunting for survival.

Elements of 'civilization' within Southeastern Indian society predated removal. The Cherokee, for example, established a written language in 1821, a national supreme court in 1822, and a written constitution in 1827. The other four nations had similar, if less noted, developments.

Records for these five nations constitute 35-50 percent of all Native American records and 80 percent of all Native American records filmed by the National Archives. This is because in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the U.S. government established the Dawes Commission to oversee land redistribution within the Five Civilized Tribes. To do this, the commission attempted to create an official list of members of each nation, and required families and individuals to fill out applications for acceptance, in essence making them prove that they belonged to that particular tribe.

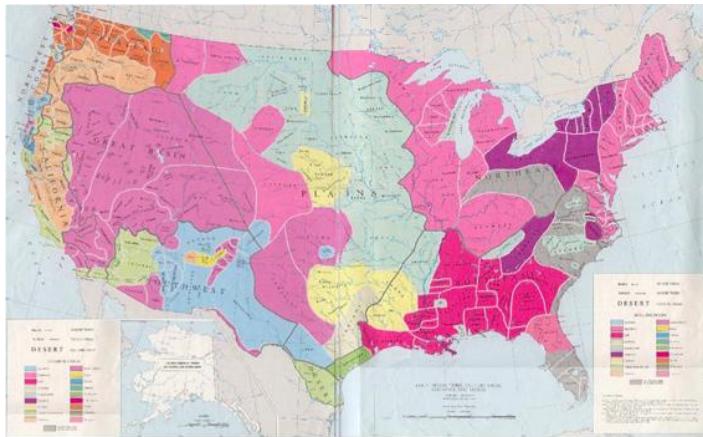
The Dawes Commission ended up rejecting almost two-thirds of the applications for various reasons, but census cards and application jackets were created for each applicant and are available for research, whether they were accepted or rejected. Ancestry has most of these records, as well as applications made to the Dawes Commission during an earlier attempt to enroll the tribes in 1896. (Here's an insider's tip: when you check the Dawes Census Cards, be sure to look at the front *and* back of each card and read all the notes. This will often lead to other cards you should check.)

The best resource for information about Native Americans other than members of these five nations is the U.S., Indian Census Rolls, 1885-1940, collection on Ancestry. These censuses include 565 federally-recognized tribes besides the Five Civilized Tribes. The early censuses usually list Indian and English names, gender, age, and relationship. Some have additional birth, marriage, death and relationship notations. Not every group took a

census each year. Keep in mind that blood quantum was usually not added until 1930s. Blood quantum is a measurement of tribal affiliation based on ancestry. For example, a child with one Native American parent and one non-Native American parent would be considered to have one-half Native American blood. If you have three non-Native American grandparents and one Native American grandparent, your blood quantum would be .25, or one-quarter. And so on.

### Location Is Key

Where your ancestors lived will help you determine with which particular nation they were affiliated. Tribes were made up of "bands" of families and often formed and reformed under new leadership over the years. It was often common for a Native American man to marry outside of his nation, and associate with his wife's people going forward. Maps showing where Native American groups lived in the U.S. at specific times can be a huge help to your search.



*From The National Atlas of the United States of America (Arch C. Gerlach, editor). Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of the Interior, Geological Survey, 1970*

Once you complete your research you will need to purchase the birth, death and marriage certificates (certified copies) for each generation back to the oldest Native American ancestor you can locate, to prove your direct ancestral line to them.

### Case Study: Becoming a Citizen of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma

For some peculiar reason, most Americans, white or black, who believe that they descend from a Native American ancestor believe that that ancestor was Cherokee, so let's use Cherokee records for a case study.

Let's say you wanted to become a member of the Cherokee Nation. How would you go about it? Well, first, Cherokee Nation citizenship requires that you have *at least one direct Cherokee ancestor* listed on the Dawes Final Rolls. This roll (census, really) was taken between 1899 and 1914 and lists Indians, white citizens, and black Freedmen (former slaves) residing in what was known as "Indian Territory" (now northeastern Oklahoma). If your ancestor did not live in this area during that time period, they will not be listed on the Dawes Rolls. Certain requirements had to be met in order to be placed on the Dawes Roll, such as being listed on previous Cherokee rolls and a proven residency in the Cherokee Nation. Many modern-day applicants do not qualify for citizenship

because their ancestors did not meet the enrollment requirements of the Dawes Commission and were not listed on the Dawes Rolls.

If you do find your ancestor listed on the Dawes Final Rolls, your next step is to obtain certified birth, marriage, and death certificates proving your lineage to that person. After you have obtained the necessary documents, contact the Cherokee Registration officer in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, to obtain an application to become a member of the nation.

Unfortunately, unless you can find your ancestor's name on an official tribal roll, you will probably not be eligible for membership. Remember, too, that some Native Americans in the 1800s did not remain with their nation when they were moved to reservations or assimilated into the larger American society. Either of these facts can make it much more difficult for you to establish a direct Native American ancestral connection. Of course, this doesn't mean you don't have Native American ancestry. In fact, we encourage you to take a DNA test which will show your percentage of Native American ancestry (but not a specific tribal affiliation or connection), over the last few hundred years. Establishing the DNA basis of Native American identity is fairly straightforward. But using archival records to prove specific Native American ancestry--that is, a connection to one particular group or nation--takes some legwork, and sometimes a little luck, but reconnecting with that heritage can be a source of pride for generations to come, even if you aren't able to join a particular nation.

**Direct Link:** [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/henry-louis-gates-jr/joining-your-familys-nati\\_b\\_8917854.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/henry-louis-gates-jr/joining-your-familys-nati_b_8917854.html)

## As Arizona's Native American students struggle to stay in school, tribal leaders move to help

By Clarissa Cooper | Cronkite News | POSTED: Jan 5, 2016

Rosalie Lalo was five-years-old when the U.S. government sent her to the Phoenix Indian School, more than 200 miles away from her Hopi family home. She was forbidden to speak her native language, her long hair was cut, and she was stripped of a traditional Hopi childhood.

At 18, she returned to the reservation, her American “assimilation” finished. Her own children would be sent to the school too, as were her grandchildren. Like generations of Native American families, they each experienced the same pattern of segregation — a legacy that experts say left a lingering impact on their education.

Today, Arizona has the third highest population of American Indians in the country and is home to 22 federally recognized tribes. And though it has the second largest Native American student population in the United States, children and teens are failing standardized tests and dropping out of school faster than any other group, according to the most recent 2014 Indian Education Annual Report done by the Arizona Department of Education.

“Look at the legacy of the boarding schools. Separation of child from family and community,” said Patty Talahongva, the granddaughter of Rosalie Lalo. “How would your family survive that? How do generations of that recover?

During the late 1800s and for decades later, the U.S. government opened boarding schools across the country with the purpose of assimilating Native American youth to American standards. Originally established to “civilize” American Indians into mainstream society, the “primary difference between Indian boarding schools and the mainstream education systems was segregation,” according to Phoenix’s Heard Museum.

Talahongva, who now works for a group called Native American Connections, witnessed the long-term impact of the Phoenix Indian School through her grandmother.

Talahongva attended the school after it was turned into a high school. She uses her position as community development manager to break down stereotypes associated with Native Americans by educating others about the history of tribal education and current problems facing tribes throughout the state.

“Typically, when I go out, I ask people to name five Native American leaders. Can you name five Native American leaders? And they can’t be dead,” she adds. “Most people can’t name five living Native American leaders.

The Phoenix Indian School, located at Central Avenue and Indian School Road, closed in 1990 after 99 years in operation. Students of high-school age have two options: Attend one of five Bureau of Indian Education high schools in the state or go to a public school closest to their home. Mostly because of location, 71 percent of students attend public schools near or on their reservations, according to the Indian Education Annual Report.

More than four decades ago, Jon Reyhner began his teaching career on the Navajo reservation. A history major, Reyhner taught sixth grade math because the school was so desperate for teachers. He now is a professor of multicultural studies at Northern Arizona University and cites less-than-adequate efforts to include history and culture into education as a main factor for students losing interest in school.

“Language loss is a major issue, and culture loss,” Reyhner said, adding that knowledge of culture and the practice of traditions and language help Native American students to better connect better with their heritage – and work harder toward an education.

Talahongva not only wants to raise awareness of current Native American issues, but also is working to remodel the old band building at the Phoenix Indian School, which is now the Steele Indian School Park in central Phoenix. The building will sit as a reminder of a time when culture was not allowed to be a part of Native American education.

It’s intended to be a center for celebrations of culture, a place for tribal leaders to gather and will include a memorial room dedicated to the history of the closed school.

“I only hope to grow, not only so people understand why Indian School Road is called Indian School Road, but what was the history of this place for 99 years, what was there before Arizona became a state,” Talahongva said.

The Native Youth Know program, a collaboration of local and national programs interested in American Indian welfare, is working to keep students engaged in education programs centered on culture and their tribes.

Projects in the Navajo Nation, for example, involve getting 5th and 6th graders to refurbish and manage a greenhouse and fundraising to give musical instruments to youth on the reservation. The Pascua Yaqui Tribe is teaching children about ancestral native diets, cultural resiliency and the history of their customs and traditions.

The Hopi tribe is having their youth develop a park to promote health and wellness in the tribe. Tribes also are trying to encourage students to leave reservations for higher education.

In 2000, the Hopi tribe established the Hopi Education Endowment Fund to help students go to college. The HEEF set aside \$10 million for the fund and uses the earned income for an endowment to further education, on and off the reservation

Vernon Kahe, a resource development manager for the fund, said the money has been instrumental in bringing more Hopi teachers back to the reservation. Twenty years ago, he says, it was hard to spot Hopi teachers in Hopi schools.

Now, more than half of the teachers on the reservation are Hopi. Before the HEEF, Kahe said the tribe, was dependent on resources and income from coal mining to fund educational efforts.

“We are growing this [fund] for the future and the money that we do have, we’re stewards of it,” Kahe said. “We’re trying to develop a fund that lasts forever.”

Since the money was put in place, the Hopi Tribe Grants and Scholarship Program have provided over 4,500 grants to Hopi students across the nation at accredited universities, resulting in 278 tribal members getting higher education degrees, according to their website.

The need for better education on reservations has gone beyond the local and state level. The Obama administration has been working to better conditions on a national scale.

The 2014 Native Youth Report by the Executive Office of the President specifically pointed to the low graduation rate of Native students nationally — 67 percent — which drops even lower in Bureau of Indian Education schools to 53 percent.

The report also found that by augmenting support of tribal cultures and traditions, students are more likely to connect with their community, want to improve it and continue with their education to reach those goals.

The state education department's report notes that more educational programs now are available to Native American high school students and those entering college. Most community colleges and universities like Northern Arizona University, University of Arizona and Arizona State University have programs for new college students they hope to retain and graduate.

“A variety of programs are also offered for Native American students in the elementary and junior high school. For example, the Mesa Unified School District has a unique cultural and educational program that addresses students at each grade level,” the report says. “The purpose of this program is to increase the personal and academic self-efficacy of Native-American students while embracing and preserving Native-American culture.”

American Indian Student Support Services at Arizona State University has started a program that sends current students to the reservation to recruit for ASU. The Tribal Nations Tour brings one of the largest universities in the country to smaller reservation schools.

Bryan Brayboy, special advisor to ASU President Michael Crow and director of the Center for Indian Education, said administrators agree that not enough is being done even for ASU's more than 2,600 Native American students.

“We have to create a climate and an environment at ASU where Native students feel welcomed,” Brayboy said, citing social structures such as friends, clubs, teacher relationships and dormitory life.

“The evidence is overwhelming that if you want Native students to do well, cohorts work and really good positive relationships work,” Brayboy said. “We’re not losing students because of some structural component that needs to be tweaked or changed.”

This spring, Gov. Doug Ducey passed an initiative expanding scholarship opportunities to students on reservations.

Arizona now has two tribal colleges to make it easier for native students to gain higher education. The Diné College and Tohono O’odham Community College have multiple campuses to give greater access to Arizona’s tribal members to seeking a higher education.

Talahongva said that through the scholarships and concerted efforts to return to tradition, schools are finding ways to reach children through their culture — and to educate them.

“We have our successes despite what happened to us, despite what happened to our families. And not just one generation or two, but many generations — the schools were open for 100 plus years, so that’s a huge impact,” she said.

**Direct Link:** <http://cronkitenews.azpbs.org/2016/01/05/as-arizonas-native-american-students-struggle-to-stay-in-school-tribal-leaders-move-to-help/>

## **How Well Does Venezuela Protect Indigenous Rights? Just Ask the Warao Community.**

Translation posted **5 January 2016 14:11 GMT**



Despite their ever-present status in Venezuelan governmental politics, indigenous communities like the Warao find themselves in extreme poverty—very far from being able to access basic rights, such as healthcare. Photos by the author.

*The original version of this article is from a study carried out by Minerva Vitti and was published by SIC magazine, Venezuela.*

“Indigenous peoples have the right to comprehensive healthcare that takes into account their practices and cultures,” reads Chapter VIII of the Constitution of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela. “The State shall recognize their traditional medicine and its complementary therapies, subject to bioethical principles.”

The above implies that health services must be adapted to the cultural particularities and necessities of each indigenous people. It's not the only place where this promise appears. It also figures in some form within the constitution's preamble and the Fundamental Law of Indigenous Peoples and Communities, as well as in Convention 169 of the International Labor Organization's Convention on Indigenous and Tribal Peoples in Independent Countries, which Venezuela ratified in 2002.

Nevertheless, the right to indigenous healthcare is being compromised by authorities in light of the multiple failures presented by the clinics in the 345 communities that cling to the distributaries of the Orinoco Delta, located in the eastern part of the country.

Within this region lies San Francisco de Guayo, located in the municipality of Antonio Díaz in the state of Delta Amacuro. This is where Venezuela's second largest indigenous population, the Warao people, can be found, who make up 7 percent of Venezuela's native peoples, after the 58 percent who belong to the Wayuu people in Zulia State, located in the western part of the country.

### **Hospital and Health Services Crisis**

This population of approximately 3,000 inhabitants relies on the "Hermana Isabel López" rural hospital, where the crisis in indigenous communities healthcare is plainly obvious. The hospital's electric generators broke down months ago and responses to requests to repair them cannot be fulfilled in Venezuela due to the import crisis for various types of electrical equipment. This makes the area dependent upon town staff, who provide very irregular service.

About 20 days ago, one of the zone's inhabitants reported that they had gone 20 days without electricity. Doctors must attend to emergencies by candlelight, and more than one child has died, due particularly to meconium aspiration syndrome, where newborns die because they inhale their first feces during childbirth. Also, the lights have gone out at the hospital many times during deliveries.



Limitations on resources reaching hospitals has translated into the death of many indigenous people in the Warao community. One of these resources is the Guayo river ambulance, the only way to carry emergency patients from the state to the capital for treatment. Photo by author and used with permission.

The hospital's water ambulance is also damaged. On one occasion, a six-month-old baby with a severe case of diarrhea had to be taken to Tucupita hospital, a five-hour boat ride (depending upon the motor's horsepower and the strength of the current). The transfer was impossible and the doctor and family members had to give up. Another case involved a Warao boy with tuberculosis, who died when he could not be transferred to Tucupita, the state capital.

The *Hermana Isabel López* Hospital has also experienced medical supply shortages. Among the numerous medical supplies which are lacking are pediatric Yelco's, a type of catheter that is introduced into the tissue or vein to extract blood, inject pharmaceuticals, or drain liquids. As an alternative, doctors must use adult-sized Yelcos, causing children great pain or even piercing their bones. Nevertheless, there is no other alternative in cases of dehydration, where the result would be fatal. Another scarce medication is sulphur cream, which is important in controlling Norwegian scabies or mange — something very common in the region.

In addition to all this, the refrigerator to keep vaccines cool broke down in October 2014, resulting in children no longer being immunized. According to a resident of San Francisco de Guayo:

They don't even give out medicines here, but they do come for your vote [...]. We don't even have electricity to keep our food, though I'm sure it will come on [during] the elections but [not] afterwards. The governor promised to get a river ambulance and community transportation but nothing has shown up yet [...] If even our own indigenous leaders don't care about our brothers, how will others care about us?

The same situation is repeated at the Dr. Luis Gómez Health Center, located in the Nabasanuka community (also in the Amacuro Delta), where the lack of medical supplies and the absence of a river ambulance have led to increased deaths among the Warao. What medicines there are have been brought by rural doctors and medical interns who have worked at obtaining them through donations: "If they didn't come here there would be nothing," said one of the nurses.

According to the community's leader and representative, Mr. Conrado Moraleda, the latest case involved an indigenous mother in an advanced state of pregnancy. An immediate transfer was not possible, as there was no ambulance service available. The result was the death of both the mother and the baby.

### **An Ethnic Threat**

In the long term, the suffering of these communities can be seen as a grave but silent threat. The lack of effective public policies concerning healthcare puts these peoples and their ancestral knowledge at permanent risk of disappearance. In the same way, the limitations experienced by these communities are also connected to other problems with a common source, creating a shameful characteristic common to the other indigenous communities of Latin America.

*The original version of this article is from a study carried out by Minerva Vitti and was published by SIC magazine, Venezuela.*

**Direct Link:** <https://globalvoices.org/2016/01/05/how-well-does-venezuela-protect-indigenous-rights-just-ask-the-warao-community/>

# Bundy Militia Musters Again Over Paiute Land

Steve Russell

1/3/16

Some of the same armed “militia” involved in the Cliven Bundy affair in Nevada have occupied federal land in Oregon formerly reserved for the Northern Paiute. Ironically, the “legal” basis for starting a fight with the federal government is that sovereignty “really” belongs to Oregon rather than the Paiutes, who have seen their federal trust land shrink from over one and a half million acres to a tiny remnant of 760 acres in Burns, Oregon, where this current armed standoff began.

Cliven Bundy is a Nevada rancher who engaged in an armed standoff with the federal government in 2014 when some of his cattle were [seized over 20 years of unpaid grazing fees](#). “Militia members” and “patriots” from all the western states and phototropic politicians from as far away as Arizona joined Bundy. Video at the time showed “militiamen” taking aim at federal officers, and the authorities decided a bloodbath over grazing fees was not sensible. When the federal agents stood down, the militias declared a major victory.

This Saturday, January 2, the war over federal authority continued when an unknown number of militia members seized a building in the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge and Ammon Bundy—Cliven Bundy’s son—released a video urging like thinking people to arm themselves and come to Oregon, declaring, “We’re going to be staying for several years.”

The “militiamen” claimed the occupation of the empty building was accomplished by 150 armed men. The armed occupation of Malheur Wildlife Refuge grew out of demonstrations over the impending deadline for Steven Hammond, 46, and his father Dwight Hammond, Jr., 73, to report to federal custody to begin serving five years in prison each for arson on public lands.

At the Hammonds’ trial, the government argued that the fires were set to cover up evidence of poaching activities. The Hammonds did not deny setting the fires but claimed their purpose was to destroy invasive species.

In the 2014 standoff, Cliven Bundy claimed that federal agents had no authority in Nevada. He now claims the same of Oregon, stating Saturday, “United States Justice Department has NO jurisdiction or authority within the State of Oregon.”

If anything is clear-cut about Indians in the Constitution, it is that relations with Indian nations are a federal responsibility. Carrying out that responsibility in Oregon, President U.S. Grant established the Malheur Indian Reservation for the Northern Paiute in 1872. It is no coincidence that the historical reservation shares a name with the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, site of the current armed standoff.

White settlement nibbled at the Malheur Indian Reservation until the Bannock War in 1878, which ended with surrendered Paiutes and Bannocks on the reservation being removed, officially to the Yakama Reservation in Washington Territory. Unofficially, Paiutes had scattered all over the Western States that comprised their aboriginal lands. The Burns Paiute Reservation is the remains of the Malheur Reservation and the Malheur Wildlife Refuge is an alternative use for the federal land, for those who believe the federal government exists.

As in Nevada, the Bundys claim the only lawful authority in the area is the Harney County Sheriff David Ward, who they have petitioned to take the Hammonds into “protective custody” from the U.S. Marshal.

In a video posted on YouTube, Ammon Bundy said, “This is a time to stand up.” *Willamette Week* reported that militia members [have been arriving in Burns, Oregon, for weeks](#).

Jon Ritzheimer made a farewell video for his family before heading out to fight with the “oppressive, tyrannical” federal government and [posted it on YouTube](#). If he were not promising to “die a free man,” his rant about the Constitution would be humorous. While he would fail my constitutional law course, his, ahem, unusual reading of the document loses some humor value when he offers it as a reason to “lay my life down to fight against tyranny,” tyranny put in place by “kids who never got their hands dirty who went off to college” and came back thinking they know as much about land management as farmers.

[Ammon Bundy claims on video to be doing God’s work](#) and says of the 2014 standoff, “because people came, we are free.” He also claims that the U.S. Attorney threatened to get the Hammonds assigned to “a less desirable prison” if they kept consulting with the militia and that would be “a death sentence.” Urging people to join in, he referred to the occupation of the Wildlife Refuge as, “This wonderful thing that the Lord is about to accomplish.”

*The Oregonian* reported that one of the occupiers is Ryan Payne, an army veteran who claimed to have organized snipers to target federal agents during the 2014 standoff at the Bundy ranch in Nevada.

Another veteran of the Bundy standoff, Blaine Cooper, told *The Oregonian*, “I went there to defend Cliven with my life.”

*Oregonian* coverage was up to date as of early January 3, and included this statement on the situation from Harney County Sheriff David Ward:

*After the peaceful rally was completed today, a group of outside militants drove to the Malheur Wildlife Refuge, where they seized and occupied the refuge headquarters. A collective effort from multiple agencies is currently working on a solution. For the time being please stay away from that area. More information will be provided as it becomes available. Please maintain a peaceful and united front and allow us to work through this situation.*

According to reporting by the Associated Press, the Hammonds are not as quick to advocate shooting at federal officers as Cliven Bundy. The AP quoted a letter from the Hammond family lawyer, W. Alan Schroeder, to Sheriff Ward: “Neither Ammon Bundy nor anyone within his group/organization speak for the Hammond family.” Dwight

Hammond himself told the AP that he and his father intend to turn themselves in on January 4 as ordered. "We gave our word that's what we would do, and we intend to act on it."

While state and federal law enforcement agencies discussed how to end the occupation without bloodshed, Cliven Bundy from his Nevada ranch and the occupiers in the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge used social media to call for supporters to come to Oregon. And come armed.

*Read more at*[\*http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/03/bundy-militia-musters-again-over-paiute-land-162939\*](http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/03/bundy-militia-musters-again-over-paiute-land-162939)

## **Native Americans in Colorado**



Chief Ignacio of the Ute tribe of Native Americans, with horse, circa 1904.  
(Public domain photo courtesy of Library of Congress)

**By Ernest Gurulé**  
[egurule@lavozcolorado.com](mailto:egurule@lavozcolorado.com)

01/06/2016

**Part I of II**

Rising out of the endless sea of evergreen, Colorado's Chimney Rock National Monument cannot help but catch the eye. Rising thousands of feet above the San Juan National Forest, Chimney Rock stands out in peaceful solitude. But this famous southwestern Colorado landmark was grabbing attention long before it inspired the imaginations of latter day travelers.

This natural point of beauty sitting between Pagosa Springs and Durango was certainly one of the first things that caught the attention of the region's first inhabitants. For them, Chimney Rock was sacred; a spiritual place that brought them closer to nature and the heavens. It also provided a panoramic view that seemed to go on forever.

"Our creation story came from these mountains," says Ernest House, Jr., a member of the Ute Mountain Ute tribe and Executive Director of the Colorado Commission on Indian Affairs. "This is our home, this is our homeland. This has always been our homeland."

The CCIA, explains House, was established in 1976. Its purpose is to deal with Indian Affairs in Colorado and also with the federal government. Interestingly, one of the compelling reasons for its founding had to do with the treatment of Native American human remains and "repatriating them to the tribes."

The Ute tribe is descended from the Weeminuch people who, by some estimates, occupied the region as long ago as 2,000 years. The modern tribal name came from the Spaniards whose expeditions into Colorado in the 1500's resulted in both a bounty of unimaginable knowledge of this new world and a legacy that remains in the form of names of cities and towns, mountains, rivers and points of interest.

While many Coloradans or others might not know or even think about it, many of the mountain roads that bisect the state were once the trails forged by the Utes. "Utes were mountainous people," says House. Long before outside civilization came to Colorado, Utes were using routes regularly used today but now called by different names. Interstate 70, for example, was once a commonly used Ute trail. The same for state highways 160 and 285.

"Ute" says House, "was a word the Spanish gave us." 'Yuhtans,' was the word Spaniards used to identify the indigenous people in the journals that recorded the Dominguez Escalante expedition. But the Spaniards were actually late comers to the region.

The most credible evidence of human activity in this region can be traced back about a thousand years. Studies show that a community of

as many as 2,000 American Indians, tribes like the Pueblos and others, called the region home. Today, Chimney Rock has federal protection. President Obama designated a 4,700 acre site, including Chimney Rock, a national monument in September 2012.

Interestingly, Chimney Rock has a parallel to England's Stonehenge. Every 18.6 years, in a phenomenon known as a lunar standstill, the moon rises directly between the twin stone pillars.

Not all significant Native American landmarks are officially designated by the government. Still, they remain important to Colorado's first citizens. House says the Garden of the Gods, Pikes Peak and Red Rocks are just a few of Colorado landmarks that hold a spiritual importance among the tribes.

While our state once teemed with nearly fifty tribes, today only two are officially designated. The Southern Ute and Ute Mountain Ute tribes are headquartered in Ignacio and Towaoc, Colorado, respectively. But despite what might seem like a small presence, it is nearly impossible to go anywhere in the state without stepping into the footprints of our state's first residents.

"A lot of people will recognize Ute names," says House, whose father, Ernest, and grandfather, Jack, are respected names both in tribal and contemporary state governments. The White River National Forest near Glenwood, Weminuch Wilderness near Silverton, Ute Pass west of Colorado Springs all hold intimate and spiritual connections to the state's Indian tribes.

House's father, also Ernest, was a member of the Ute Mountain Tribal Council and, in 1982, elected chairman. The elder House was instrumental in the completion of two significant water compacts that were essential to tribal development. He also had a hand in the construction of a tribal health center. House died in a motorcycle accident in 2011.

Jack House, House's grandfather, was the last traditional, hereditary leader of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe. He died in 1971. A stained-glass window depicting House can be seen in the old Supreme Court Chambers at the state capitol.

According to the 2010 U.S. Census, there are nearly 60,000 American Indians living in Colorado, the majority living in the Denver metropolitan area. But, history tells us that early handing of Indian affairs by the U.S. government had a downsizing impact on this number.

House says the government relocated four bands or tribes to Utah. The Ute Mountain and Southern Ute tribes were given reservation lands in southwest Colorado. Indigenous people living on the eastern plains, including Arapaho, Cheyenne, Comanche and Lakota were all moved to other places.

American history has been stained by thoughtless and premeditatedly callous treatment of Native Americans. Colorado's history is blotted by the Sand Creek Massacre. Led by Major John Chivington, a force of 700 U.S. soldiers attacked and laid waste to a village of Arapaho and Cheyenne in Southeast Colorado. Soldiers killed as many as 163, mostly women and children, November 29, 1864. The location is today a national historic site.

In December 2014, on the steps of the State Capitol, Governor John Hickenlooper officially apologized for the attack. "We should not be afraid to criticize and condemn that which is inexcusable," said Hickenlooper. "On behalf of the state of Colorado, I want to apologize."

Native Americans today are engaged in another war, this one a full-on battle against a variety of illnesses, including diabetes, heart disease, cancer, drug and alcohol addiction and mental illness. In nearly every category of illness, Native Americans hold the dubious distinction of being at or near the top in numbers of victims.

Diabetes, which can lead to kidney problems, ranks highest among Native Americans among all ethnic categories in the country. Cancer, heart disease and infant mortality also continue to plague this population.

And while statistics on physical health issues impacting Native Americans are astronomical, mental health is also a serious issue.

Suicide or attempted suicide is a plague on the land for Indians, including indigenous Alaskans. According to the Centers for Disease Control, Native Americans between the ages 25-29 have the highest suicide rates in the country. Suicide is also the second leading cause of death among Indians aged 10-34. Indian males, ages 15-24, die by suicide at a rate 30 percent higher than whites, blacks and Asian/Pacific Islanders.

Next week, we will look at life on the reservation in the city for Native Americans. We will also examine education on and off of the reservation and the sometimes fractured relationship between Native

Americans and the federal government as well as the impact it has on daily life for Indians

**Direct Link:** <http://www.lavozcolorado.com/detail.php?id=8434>

# Arizona tribal leaders help students stay in school

Clarissa Cooper, Cronkite News Service 12:21 p.m. MST January 6, 2016



Rosalie Lalo was five-years-old when the U.S. government sent her to the Phoenix Indian School, more than 200 miles away from her Hopi family home. She was forbidden to speak her native language, her long hair was cut, and she was stripped of a traditional Hopi childhood.

At 18, she returned to the reservation, her American “assimilation” finished. Her own children would be sent to the school too, as were her grandchildren. Like generations of Native American families, they each experienced the same pattern of segregation — a legacy that experts say left a lingering impact on their education.

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“Look at the legacy of the boarding schools. Separation of child from family and community,” said Patty Talahongva, the granddaughter of Rosalie Lalo. “How would your family survive that? How do generations of that recover?

## A segregated, lonely past

During the late 1800s and for decades later, the U.S. government opened boarding schools across the country with the purpose of assimilating Native American youth to American standards. Originally established to “civilize” American Indians into

mainstream society, the “primary difference between Indian boarding schools and the mainstream education systems was segregation,” according to Phoenix’s Heard Museum.

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Apache children from Florida after arrival to the Carlisle boarding school in Pennsylvania. (Photo: Arizona Historical Foundation)

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Talahongva not only wants to raise awareness of current Native American issues, but also is working to remodel the old band building at the Phoenix Indian School, which is now

the Steele Indian School Park in central Phoenix. The building will sit as a reminder of a time when culture was not allowed to be a part of Native American education.

It's intended to be a center for celebrations of culture, a place for tribal leaders to gather and will include a memorial room dedicated to the history of the closed school.

"I only hope to grow, not only so people understand why Indian School Road is called Indian School Road, but what was the history of this place for 99 years, what was there before Arizona became a state," Talahongva said.

## Tribal leaders step in

The Native Youth Know program, a collaboration of local and national programs interested in American Indian welfare, is working to keep students engaged in education programs centered on culture and their tribes.

Projects in the Navajo Nation, for example, involve getting 5th and 6th graders to refurbish and manage a greenhouse and fundraising to give musical instruments to youth on the reservation. The Pascua Yaqui Tribe is teaching children about ancestral native diets, cultural resiliency and the history of their customs and traditions.

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## A national problem

The need for better education on reservations has gone beyond the local and state level. The Obama administration has been working to better conditions on a national scale.

The 2014 Native Youth Report by the Executive Office of the President specifically pointed to the low graduation rate of Native students nationally — 67 percent — which drops even lower in Bureau of Indian Education schools to 53 percent.

The report also found that by augmenting support of tribal cultures and traditions, students are more likely to connect with their community, want to improve it and continue with their education to reach those goals.

The state education department's report notes that more educational programs now are available to Native American high school students and those entering college. Most community colleges and universities like Northern Arizona University, University of Arizona and Arizona State University have programs for new college students they hope to retain and graduate.

“A variety of programs are also offered for Native American students in the elementary and junior high school. For example, the Mesa Unified School District has a unique cultural and educational program that addresses students at each grade level,” the report says. “The purpose of this program is to increase the personal and academic self-efficacy of Native-American students while embracing and preserving Native-American culture.”

American Indian Student Support Services at Arizona State University has started a program that sends current students to the reservation to recruit for ASU. The Tribal Nations Tour brings one of the largest universities in the country to smaller reservation schools.

Bryan Brayboy, special advisor to ASU President Michael Crow and director of the Center for Indian Education, said administrators agree that not enough is being done even for ASU's more than 2,600 Native American students.

“We have to create a climate and an environment at ASU where Native students feel welcomed,” Brayboy said, citing social structures such as friends, clubs, teacher relationships and dormitory life.

“The evidence is overwhelming that if you want Native students to do well, cohorts work and really good positive relationships work,” Brayboy said. “We’re not losing students because of some structural component that needs to be tweaked or changed.”

This spring, Gov. Doug Ducey passed an initiative expanding scholarship opportunities to students on reservations.

Arizona now has two tribal colleges to make it easier for native students to gain higher education. The Diné College and Tohono O’odham Community College have multiple campuses to give greater access to Arizona’s tribal members to seeking a higher education.

Talahongva said that through the scholarships and concerted efforts to return to tradition, schools are finding ways to reach children through their culture — and to educate them.

“We have our successes despite what happened to us, despite what happened to our families. And not just one generation or two, but many generations — the schools were open for 100 plus years, so that’s a huge impact,” she said.

**Direct Link:** <http://www.azcentral.com/story/news/local/arizona/2016/01/06/arizona-native-american-students-struggle-tribal-leaders/78360994/>

## **Honor the Earth Grants \$90K to Indigenous Organizations to Protect Sacred Sites, Cultural Traditions**

ICTMN Staff

1/6/16

Honor the Earth has released \$90,000 in new grants to Indigenous organizations in North America and the Pacific.

“This year’s grants are particularly focused on protection of sacred sites, and the continuation of strong cultural traditions in our Native communities,” Board of Directors Co-Chair Shannon Martin (Potawatami/Anishinaabe) said.

The grants range from the work to protect sacred ceremonial grounds and traditions to the repatriation of Ojibwe birchbark scrolls to the White Earth Band of Anishinaabeg.

Grantees include Apache Stronghold (San Carlos Apache Reservation), Earth Guardians (Boulder Colorado), Halau Hula Ke’alaonamaupua (Hawaii), Native American Educational Technologies (Lac Courte Orielles reservation, Wisconsin), Nibi Walks (Minneapolis), Horse Spirit Society (Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota), Water Unity Alliance (Mohawk Territory) Isle de Jean Charles Band of Biloxi-Chitimacha-Choctaw (Louisiana), the White Earth Tribe, and many others.

Apache Stronghold seeks to protect Oak Flats from mining by the Resolution Copper (a subsidiary of British Rio Tinto Zinc). Oak Flats is a sacred ceremonial site, where Apache Coming of Age and other ceremonies are held. Early in 2014, Senator John McCain attached a rider on a military appropriations bill, transferring this land to Rio Tinto Zinc. Since then the Apache people have been working to secure new legislation and protection of this site.

Earth Guardians, based in Boulder Colorado, is a youth-led organization addressing climate change. The organization, led largely by Indigenous rappers Xiuhtezcatl Martinez and his little brother Itzcuaughtli, has mobilized youth to attend many conferences, secured lawsuits by youth in a number of states on climate change, and continues to encourage youth participation, in environmental issues.

[Horse Spirit Society](#) is a sponsor of the 25th annual Wounded Knee Memorial Ride, where Native and non-Native riders retrace the 200-plus mile ride of Chief Big Foot's band, which led him and his people, in the middle of December from Standing Rock Reservation to Wounded Knee, where they sought protection, and were subsequently massacred. The spiritual ride is considered a very important part of healing of Lakota and other people.

Other grants include to [Nibi Walks](#), a set of spiritual walks around the Great Lakes and Superior to honor the water and continue Anishinaabe spiritual traditions. The Isle de Jean Charles band of Choctaw seek to develop new community plans for sustainable agriculture, after their forced removal due to damages from the BP Deepwater Horizon Spill of 2010, which contaminated much of their traditional homeland. And the White Earth Band of Ojibwe is presently repatriating a sacred birchbark scroll, for ceremonial and cultural purposes. The scroll had been held by the Peabody Museum at Harvard University, for over 100 years.

“We are very pleased to be able to join with communities protecting their sacred sites, encouraging and nurturing their youth, and restoring cultural traditions,” Board Co-chair Paul DeMain said. “These continue to be trying times for Native people, as the industrial economy, often working through some of the largest polluters in the world, continues to threaten what remains of ecosystems and watersheds. Some 75 percent of the world’s biodiversity remains in Indigenous territories, and many of the most pristine watersheds remain in Indigenous territories.

“Lake Superior, for instance, and the Great Lakes hold one fifth of the world’s fresh water and are threatened, not only by oil pipelines, but also by mining projects and new industrial pig farming operations. There’s a 26,000 pig farm proposals right now our communities are facing, which would essentially dump pig manure into the Lake Superior Watershed. This, is one of many challenges our communities continue to face.”

Many of the organizations funded by [Honor the Earth](#) have successfully stopped projects, including this year’s victories over the [Keystone XL pipeline](#) (no presidential permit) and the [Gogebic Taconite](#)

[\(GTAC\)](#) mine proposed for Northern Wisconsin. “We hope there is justice for many of these communities,” Amy Ray of the Indigo Girls (Honor Board member) said. The Shiprock Chapter of the Navajo Nation, for instance, is asking for funds to look at a water sustainability project, in light of the 3 million gallon spill into the Animas River, due to an accident caused by the Environmental Protection Agency in its testing of a mining dam superfund site. The spill released toxic water in August of this year, and the EPA has not responded to requests by the Navajo Nation. Many crops and livestock were lost throughout the Navajo Nation, as the irrigation systems had to be shut down, to protect farms from long term contamination. “We know it is time to protect future generations, not corporations,” Kimberly Smith explained.

Honor the Earth, based on the White Earth Reservation, is a national Native organization, which was founded in 1993, working on environmental and cultural support for grassroots Indigenous communities. The organization works with artists and musicians, including, this year, Nahko and Medicine for the People, Aku Matu, Chastity Brown, Sister Tree,

and Annie Humphrey. With over 100 benefit concerts over the past years, board members include Emily Saliers and Amy Ray of the Indigo Girls, Jennifer Kreisberg (Ulali) and many Indigenous leaders, including Board Co-chair Paul DeMain (Indian Country Communications), Kimberly Smith (Dine Artist and Youth Organizer), and Robert Gough of the Intertribal Council on Utility Policy. This year, Honor the Earth hopes to expand the staffing as part of a leadership transition, and deepen work nationally on Native environmental issues.

Honor the Earth would particularly like to thank our donors and supporters nationally, and our new partners the Mille Lacs band of Ojibwe, Shakopee, Swift Foundation, Kalleopeia, Ellen Poss, V Day and Carolyn Foundation for their tremendous support of our work and our ability to support Native communities and protection of sacred landscapes and ways.

*Read more at*<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/06/honor-earth-grants-90k-indigenous-organizations-protect-sacred-sites-cultural-traditions>

## **Native American Tribe Says Oregon Armed Occupiers Are Desecrating Sacred Land**

Updated January 6, 2016 5:20 PM ET  
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MERRIT KENNEDY



Burns Paiute Tribal Chairperson Charlotte Rodrique talks to reporters about the armed occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge near Burns, Ore., on Wednesday.

With the armed occupation of a federal wildlife refuge in Oregon in its fifth day, a local Native American tribe says the militants are "desecrating sacred property." Oregon Public Broadcasting's Amanda Peacher tells our Newscast unit that Burns Paiute tribal leaders denounced the militants and demanded that they leave. "The 190,000-acre wildlife refuge is within Paiute ancestral lands," Amanda says.

Tribal Chairperson Charlotte Rodrique says that she is "offended by occupiers' statements about returning the land to its rightful owners," Amanda reports.

"You know, who are the rightful owners?" says Rodrique. "It just really rubs me the wrong way that we have a bunch of misinformed people in here — they're not the original owners."

According to Paiute story and legend, the tribe has lived in this area since "before the Cascade Mountains were formed."

Here's more on the tribe's long history with the land, from The Oregonian:

"The tribe once occupied a large swath of land that includes the Malheur National Wildlife refuge — archaeological evidence dates back 6,000 years — but they were forced out in the late 1870s. Before settlers arrived, the tribe used it as a wintering ground, said Charlotte Rodrique, the tribal chair.

"In 1868, the tribe signed a treaty with the federal government that requires the government to protect natives' safety. According to the tribe, the federal government promised to prosecute 'any crime or injury perpetrated by any white man upon the Indians.'

"Rodrique said the tribe never ceded its rights to the land. It works with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management to preserve archaeological sites."

Rodrique told Amanda that she sees "the federal refuge managers as partners in helping protect the tribe's cultural artifacts."

The anti-federalist militants say they are occupying the building in support of Dwight and Steven Hammond — two ranchers who were convicted of arson on federal lands. Those ranchers have not publicly supported the takeover and turned themselves in to serve their sentences on Monday.

Ryan Bundy, one of the group's leaders, had said Monday that they would leave if local residents asked them to. But on Tuesday, he reversed that stance to OPB, saying that "the purpose of this whole thing is getting people excited. And [the people in Harney County] are excited that this is taking place."

Residents actually have mixed opinions about the armed occupation, as we heard on Morning Edition. The county sheriff says he will hold a community meeting to discuss the issue at 4 p.m. local time Wednesday, hoping to find a "peaceful solution."

**Direct Link:** <http://www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/01/06/462179325/native-american-tribe-says-oregon-armed-occupiers-are-desecrating-sacred-land>

**Adam Sandler's 'Ridiculous 6' insulted some Native Americans. Now it's Netflix's 'No. 1' movie.**

By Justin Wm. Moyer January 7 at 5:00 AM



Adam Sandler last year. (Frazer Harrison/Getty Images)

Despite his long string of hits, Adam Sandler was in a tough spot less than a year ago. As the actor approached 50, the movie that was to kick off his historic four-picture Netflix deal, a comedy western called “The Ridiculous 6,” courted controversy with its portrayal of Native Americans. The native characters were the butt of jokes that didn’t seem all that funny — ones that made Sandler seem stranded in the “Saturday Night Live” bro-mode that launched him to fame two decades ago.

“The examples of disrespect included native women’s names such as Beaver’s Breath and No Bra, an actress portraying an Apache woman squatting and urinating while smoking a peace pipe, and feathers inappropriately positioned on a teepee,” [Indian Country, a news website, reported.](#)

“We talked to the producers about our concerns,” a Native American actor on the film, Allison Young, [said at the time](#). “They just told us, ‘If you guys are so sensitive, you should leave.’ I was just standing there and got emotional and teary-eyed. I didn’t want to cry, but the feeling just came over me. This is supposed to be a comedy that makes you laugh. A film like this should not make someone feel this way.”

Now, however, it seems this dustup’s dust has settled. Its questionable politics and [terrible reviews](#) aside, “The Ridiculous 6” is a certified Netflix hit. So said Netflix chief content officer Ted Sarandos on Wednesday during a keynote at the 2016 Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas.

“It’s also enjoyed a spot at No. 1 in every territory we operate in, and in many of them it’s still No. 1,” Sarandos said, [as Variety reported](#). The publication reported the movie had “been seen more times in 30 days than any other movie in Netflix history.” This

wasn't the same as saying "The Ridiculous 6" was Netflix's most watched movie ever, but many did think so — including the film's co-star, Rob Schneider.

Even as "The Ridiculous 6" faced hordes of Twitter haters, Netflix did not back away from its unique relationship with Sandler — the first such deal the online video service has ventured into.

"The movie has ridiculous in the title for a reason: because it is ridiculous," Netflix said in a statement at the time. "It is a broad satire of Western movies and the stereotypes they popularized, featuring a diverse cast that is not only part of — but in on — the joke."

When the film was released last month, some weren't laughing.

"Netflix can f— off with their 'Tonto Speak' in Ridiculous 6," one Twitter user wrote. "It's 2015 and media still serves as tool to subvert Native cultural/identity."

Still, the success of "The Ridiculous 6" wasn't just a victory for Sandler — a man who, despite the millions of dollars that his films make, sometimes seems a bit out of touch with the sensitivities of the modern age. (His response when his Netflix deal was announced in 2014? "Netflix rhymes with Wet Chicks ... "Let the streaming begin!!!!"") It was a victory for Netflix — a growing company with an eye-popping stock price and a stable of hits such as "House of Cards" and "Orange Is the New Black" that seem to be taking over our culture.

"You are witnessing the birth of a global TV network," Reed Hastings, Netflix's chief executive, said during the keynote, as the Associated Press reported.

He was right. Although China was not yet in its grasp, Hastings announced that the company is now available in 130 countries and 21 languages.

"The key in approaching the Chinese business is really working on relationships," he said. "In the rest of the world, we are racing ahead."



Reed Hastings at CES. (Reuters/Steve Marcus)

Although the future may be bright for a company once known for delivering CDs in red envelopes, not everyone was enthused that Sandler is coming along for the ride.

“The Ridiculous 6 is the most watched movie on Netflix ever, which supports my theory that people are terrible and humanity is doomed,” critic Nathan Rabin wrote on Twitter.

**Direct Link:** <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/morning-mix/wp/2016/01/07/adam-sandlers-ridiculous-6-insulted-some-native-americans-now-its-netflixs-no-1-movie/>

## **Native Students at U. Montana Threatened by Cuts**

Various Authors

1/7/16

We are writing to express our concern about proposed budget cuts to both American Indian Student Services (AISS) and the Native American Studies Department (NAS) that might impact the success of Native American students at the University of Montana.

Native American students are unique. Although many of our Native American students at UM are high achievers, many also face barriers and challenges distinct from the conventional college student population. Working with Native students requires cultural sensitivity and knowledge. Just as UM works with veterans, international students, and student athletes, the University recognizes the varying needs of diverse populations in its efforts to promote academic success.

Studies show that providing culturally based student services, academic advising and curriculum are the key to Native American student success. These are currently being met to a significant degree by AISS and the NAS staff. The growing numbers of Native American students and the high numbers of American Indian students graduating from UM are evidence of our success.

The services provided by AISS are based on proven retention methods that help American Indian students from reservation communities in Montana and beyond to successfully immerse themselves in university culture. AISS provides a comfortable, culturally recognizable space that allows Native American students to find their footing at

UM and thrive within the larger university community. AISS supports Native American students by providing advocacy, referrals, programs and activities. AISS partners with academic departments and student support services across UM, as well as agencies within the surrounding Missoula community. The academic advising by NAS staff assists Native students to navigate the academic system and to stay on track for graduation. These two offices, with the help of others across campus, work to ensure the success of more than 700 Native American students.

Native American student success is the responsibility of UM because of treaty obligations by the federal government and constitutional mandates by the State of Montana. UM has long recognized its responsibility and has slowly built a solid foundation with both AISS and NAS. While we understand the gravity of the current budget situation at UM, we, the undersigned want to emphasize that maintaining and strengthening programs that promote Native American student success at UM make fiscal, ethical, and academic good sense. Let us remember in these difficult fiscal times to keep UM's powerful principles of inclusion and diversity strong.

Sincerely,

The following American Indian Support and Development Council members:

David Beck, Professor, Native American Studies Department

Royelle Bundy, Director, American Indian Student Services

Ray Carlisle

Julie Biando Edwards, Associate Professor, Ethnic Studies Librarian and Diversity Coordinator

George Price (Assonet Wampanoag), Lecturer, Native American Studies, African American Studies, and History

Neyooxet Greymorning, Professor, Native American Studies Department and Anthropology

Kevin Kicking Woman, Tribal Outreach Program Coordinator

Rosalyn LaPier (Blackfeet/Métis), Assistant Professor, Environmental Studies Program

Wilena Old Person (Yakama/Blackfeet)

Maegan Rides At The Door, MA, (Nakota/Dakota/Absentee Shawnee)

Darlene Samson

Kathryn Shanley (Nakota), Professor of Native American Studies

Aaron Thomas (Navajo), Associate Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry

Rick van den Pol

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2016/01/07/native-students-u-montana-threatened-cuts>